The Kurumas of Malabar

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As with most anthropologists, my main indebtedness is to the people among whom I worked; and in particular to the people of Nellivayal, to my landlord Mr. Nochamvayal Veliyan, and to my able assistant Mr. K. S. Panikkar. I must also thank the officials of the local Administration and my friends among the local planters for their hospitality and assistance.

To my teachers and colleagues at London and Manchester University I owe a special debt of gratitude. Professor C. von Furer-Haimendorf was my supervisor, and from him originated the first suggestion of a study of the Mullu Kurumas. Part of the writing-up was carried out at Manchester University, where the suggestions of Professor M. Gluckman and others have been very stimulating. I must also acknowledge my debt to my first teacher Professor M. N. Srinivas, then lecturer in Indian Sociology at Oxford, who also acted as my supervisor in the field.

Conventions

Vernacular terms have been kept, it is hoped, to a minimum. They are usually given in brackets after the initial use of each important term such as----hamlet (kudi). This indicates a Kuruma hamlet, and not any hamlet. The few terms that have been used repeatedly are either familiar from the existing literature on Malabar (such as taravād), or else would appear to create more difficulties by being anglicised than by being left untranslated.

The vernacular language is Malayalam, which employs in its written form 578 different syllabic characters. In the Romanised form in which these have been rendered, no great attempt at fidelity has been made. Diacritical marks have not been added to consonants nor consistently to vowels. Thus the long "e" in dēsam is shown by the overprinted dash, but no accent is placed over the "a" of mattu, or the initial "a" of Nayar, since in these forms they are probably already familiar from the literature. "Th" is pronounced as in the English "thorn" and "dh" as in "those." Plurals have not been given in the Malayalam form but in the singular with addition of a final "s"; thus Kurumas and amsams become the plurals of Kuruma and amsam respectively.

In genealogies two forms of symbolic representation have been used, sometimes separately and sometimes together. One is the conventional use of triangle and circle for male and female. The other is the use of personal names in various forms of script or type. Males are shown by capital letters, females by small-case letters, and death by the underlining of the name.

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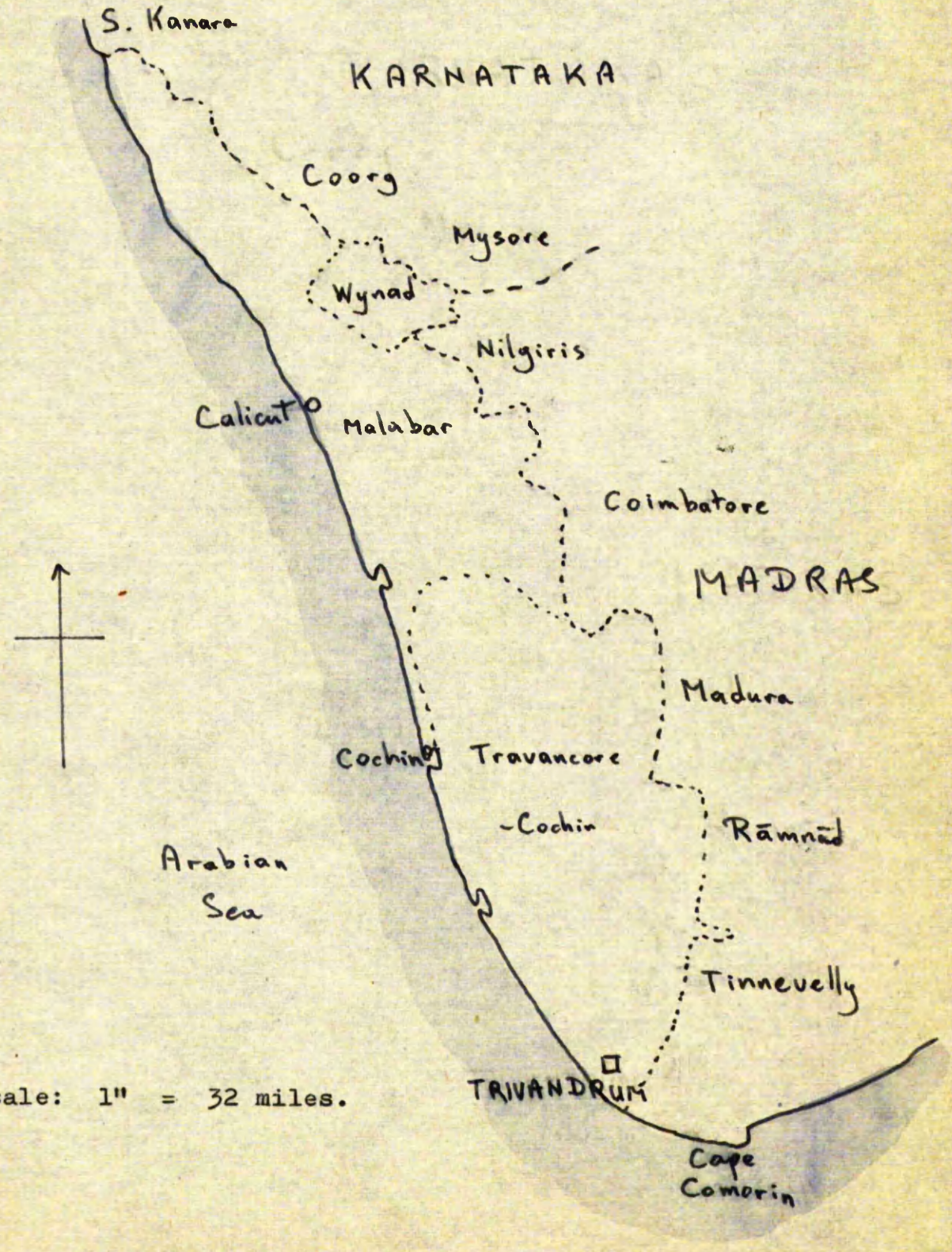


Scale: 1" = 32 miles.

Chapter I. Introductory.

In this thesis I describe the authority structure of the Mullu Kurumas, and the relation of that structure to ritual, kinship, and territorial organisation; and show how that structure has reacted to recent changes in the regional caste structure and the total environment. The Mullu Kurumas are peasant cultivators of the Wynad plateau in Malabar, South India. Officially they are designated a tribal society, but for reasons to be given later, I have regarded them as a caste rather than a tribe.

As part of the process of rapid social change now occurring in Wynad, the Kurumas have been drawn into membership of a number of major social structures between which major contradictions exist. Membership of these structures tends to be exclusive in proportion to the extent of the contradictions between them. I have distinguished three such structures, and will define them as I describe the nature of the changes that have taken place. Briefly, they are a tribal structure, a caste structure, and the political and economic structure of the modern secular State.

The Wynad plateau has for centuries been subject to political control and cultural influence from coastal Malabar (1). Under the Nayars, the dominant caste of Malabar, it was organised into chiefdoms, and a local caste system came into being, in which the Kurumas found a place. The plateau is physically isolated, and a large part of its population consists of communities peculiar to it, such as the Kurumas. Some of these are or were tribal, while others appear to have been immigrant caste groups from Mysore

1) See the map overleaf at p. vi

or Tamilnad, such as the Chetties. Every such group was politically subordinate to the Nayars, and took rank below them in the caste scale.

Wynad came under British control over a decade after coastal Malabar, and under effective administration later still. No proper land survey was made there until the closing years of the nineteenth century. Unlike coastal Malabar, it came under British control as the result of military conquest, and the estates of those Nayars who had resisted British possession were declared forfeit. However, the lack of an efficient land survey much diminished the extent of these escheats. Economic development from a primarily subsistence economy based on paddy began in the latter half of the last century with the establishment there of European-owned estates growing such cash-crops as coffee and tea. This involved Wynad in the gradual spread of a mercantile economy.

Since about 1900 the rate and extent of change has rapidly increased. Two aspects of it, in addition to the spread of mercantilism, must be emphasised. One is the intervention of the State, the other a flood of landless immigrants from coastal Malabar and Travancore. The State became a major landowner in Wynad as a result of the escheats that followed the British conquest. Further land was taken over for failure to pay the revenue charges imposed after the 1886 settlement, and large areas of forest were purchased from their owners by the Indian Forest Department at about the same time. Virtually all this land was acquired from Nayar or allied joint families.

The present century has seen an extension of this process. Just after the second world war, the Madras Government acquired by compulsory purchase a compact block of over 30,000 acres of mixed land for a colonisation scheme, and have recently extended it. This action did not initiate immigration into Wynad from the coast, but has encouraged it, in that it gave publicity to the fact that population density in Wynad was low, and land relatively cheap and abundant there. Immigrants now compose about a third of the total population. Many of them are not Hindus, but Malabar Muslims (Moplahs) or Christians, and much of the retail trade and money-lending of the region has come into their hands.

The effect of these successive changes has been to disrupt village organisation, weaken caste interdependence within the region, and greatly weaken the position of the Nayars as the dominant caste within village and regional structures. In feudal Wynad; that is, in Wynad before the British conquest, and to a great extent until the land survey of 1886, most landowners and village Headmen, and all higher political authorites were Nayars. Today scarcely half-a-dozen major landowners of that caste still exist in Wynad, holding the residues of estates diminished by these changes and fragmented by joint-family partition.

A major cleavage now exists within the regional (Wynad) caste structure between those castes which are territorially extensive beyond the region, and those which are not. As Gough and Miller have shown for Malabar, and other anthropologists for other parts

of India, a major change in caste organisation has been the territorial extension of caste ties, sometimes to the limits of the linguistic region. This extension the Kurumas and other castes peculiar to Wynad have been unable to make. The effect has been to stress their isolation and cultural aberrance from the Malabar and Kerala caste system. This isolation coupled with a decline in caste-interdependence in economic and political relations, has emphasised their tribal character in relation to the wider caste system; either separately as individual tribes, or collectively as a tribal association.

However, this is only one tendency of many. The Kurumas themselves emphasise their membership of the traditional regional caste system as a means of resisting or compensating for status claims by immigrant Hindus. Two opposed caste systems may be said to coexist in Wynad, each to some extent exclusive of the other. Immigrant Hindus recognise caste differences between the indigenous communities, but tend to categorise them all as "Junglies", "Tribals", or "Harijans." The latter tend to regard Hindu immigrants as immigrants, rather than as members of castes towards which specific patterns of behaviour should be observed.

The Nayars occupy positions in both systems, and form the common referent of caste status. Nayar families in Wynad have always maintained kinship and economic ties with certain adjacent coastal kingdoms during the feudal period, and in the modern period these ties have been multiplied and extended. Status-differentiation between immigrant and indigenous Nayars is therefore not a problem.

There is strong Kuruma feeling for the Nayars as their caste patrons, and indeed as the legendary creators of their caste, and organisers of the regional system. However, they distinguish between Nayar immigrants and those Nayars whose families have long local associations. The latter are "good" or "proper" Nayars (nallu Nāyar), the former are Nayars tout court. My own assistant, an immigrant of military Nayar caste, was more than once insulted by autochthones when on tour in parts of Wynad where he was not known personally by being told: "you say you are a Nayar, but how can we be sure?"

The opposition of two caste systems has been indirectly encouraged by the decline of Nayar political and economic power. This decline has enabled the Kurumas and other indigenes to idealise the traditional caste system. The conflict of landlord versus tenant , of Chieftain or village Headman against subject has now largely been removed from Kuruma-Nayar relationships. Conflict lies instead with the Administration and its agents, with the immigrant shopkeeper, moneylender, and landowner. These are now usually not Nayars, and often not even Hindus. At the same time the actual personnel of the "good" Nayar category tends to be diminished to the occupants of specific offices in the traditional regional structure. These are the descendants of major landowning families that have partitioned or otherwise lost most of their land.

Thus, at Nellivayal, the area of intensive fieldwork, some six conjugal families of Nayars live, as peasant cultivators. All of

these but two were deemed 'ordinary' Nayars, irrespective of their caste ranking, since they were immigrants. The two exceptions were the Nayar agents of the local landlord, or rather the official agent and his son and their families. The landlord was Nellivayal Kidāv, a high sub-caste of military Nayar, an absentee in North Malabar, where the principal holdings of the family lay in the coastal plain. The joint family had remained intact until just after the second world war, and was still in process of partition at the time when fieldwork was carried out. The family estate at Nellivayal and in that area had been diminished by private sale in the past, and was dramatically reduced in 1947 by compulsory State purchase. Enough remained to justify the employment of this resident Nayar agent, who also conducted ceremonies in Nellivayal temple, which the landlord continued to own. No member of his family had lived there for some years, although occasional visits were made, coinciding with ceremonies at the temple.

During these visits forms of respect were accorded to the landlord by the Kurumas and other indigenous castes of the neighbourhood, though most of them had ceased to be or had never been his tenants. He was the Lord (Tamburan), and was so addressed by them, whereas all the local Nayar cultivators are directly addressed by their names followed by the caste-name. He and his family fall within the category of "good" Nayar. So also, in virtue of their connection with him, do the resident agent and his son. The other Nayars do not. The agent is not a member of the Kidāv's matrilineage but is connected with it.

Respect is shown him not for his power, for he has very little, but for his authority. This derives from his traditional role as major landowner and military chief in the area, from his accepted caste status as a "good" Nayar, and from his continued ownership of the village temple (1) and the site, now overgrown but still of ritual significance, of the "Big House" or Edam where once his ancestors lived. His authority is relevant only in terms of the traditional caste structure of the locality, and is recognised by the autochthones but not by the immigrants, who hereabouts compose about half the population. The Nayar himself recognises that his authority depends to a great extent on his refraining from exercising it save in a narrow range of circumstances, on good will and the circumstances of his presence. His rare visits therefore coincide with temple festivals, and are sufficiently widely spaced to ensure that whenever he appears, his services as judge or arbiter in caste disputes will be required.

His motives in appearing at all are, to oversee his property and to fulfil his ritual duties at the temple. The present landlord is an old man; and both indigenes and members of his party informed me that, for him to prosper and escape sickness, it is necessary for him occasionally to propitiate the family gods and Ancestor-spirits here in situ. In recent years an additional motive has apparently been the hope of regaining part of the expropriated land on the grounds that it has always been temple land, though never registered as such.

1) Its status as "village temple" is discussed below.

I have described Nellivayal temple as the "village temple." It is necessary to qualify this, and in doing so, to say something of territorial association in Wynad. Village communities there are of the dispersed type. In feudal times they were significantly more extensive in area than on the coast, because of the smaller density of population in Wynad. Their boundaries still exist much as in the past, but the changes recently brought about in Wynad have largely destroyed them as communities, especially the influx of immigrants. They persist primarily as units of revenue-collection and other aspects of administration. This change is discussed in more detail in chapter II.

Nellivayal temple lies on the boundary between the revenue villages of Nulpura and Nenmēni. It actually lies within the latter, but this is the consequence of a recent boundary change; it is regarded as being in Nulpura, and its congregation is drawn from that village and not from Nenmēni. It is not the only Hindu temple of importance in Nulpura; others exist at Telambetta, at Tēkambetta, at Māroth, and at Ponkuli, though none is quite so important as Nellivayal. Three of the other temples are also owned by the Nellivayal landlord, or were so until very recently. All the temple officers at these shrines and the bulk of their congregations are drawn from the indigenous population. Immigrants tend to restrict their attendance to the temples at the local bazaar of Sultan's Battery, where Sanskritic gods are worshipped. The cultural separation of immigrants and indigenes is thus an important factor in the field of ritual.

At these temples, and notably at Nellivayal, intercaste co-operation and caste ordination among the indigenous communities is exhibited. The internal structuring of each caste group reinforces the importance of these temples, and also of the role of the landlord as owner of them. To take the Kurumas as an instance: I have described them as an acephalic community, of which the basic unit is the patrilineal extended family occupying exclusive hamlets. But they are further organised into caste villages, or Localities, living on a common Earth and owing allegiance to a single Locality Headman. His office does not come from within the Locality but from the intercaste village, and is conferred on him by the gods of the village temple and by the landlord as owner of that temple and feudal head of the village. It is true that the Kuruma Headman's power does not derive wholly from this installation. His office succeeds by seniority within a particular patrilineage or segment of a patrilineage; that this patrilineage tends to be the largest in the Locality, and to be linked to the other patrilineages of the Locality by affinal or kinship ties, which may come to be regarded as patrilateral ties. But the threat of fission within this nuclear patrilineage offers a constant threat to the stability of the group, which is met by emphasising the dependence of the caste office on its Nayar creator.

In theory, immigrant Hindus can establish themselves in Wynad as landowners, and take over the role of the absentee or impoverished traditional Nayar landowner. In practise this is not possible; at least it has not occurred, though motives for them to

do so are not absent. Such persons, even though accepted as Nayars, would not necssarily be regarded as "good" Nayars; the existing Locality Headmen and the indigenous castes they represent would not readily accept the change, but re-emphasise their loyalty to the dwindling and increasingly impotent body of long-established and accepted Nayar families. In any case, present conditions in Wynad make the formation of large new holdings unlikely, while the very last piece of property that the established families are likely to dispose of are the sites of the temples that they own. For so long as a man retains the temple site, for so long he remains the landlord qua village head (janmi). The Nellivayal landlord is landlord because he owns the village temple or temples, not because he still owns a hundred or so acres of paddylandx still.

With the recent rapid breakdown of village organisation it is usual to find that the traditional role of village Headman in social control has been divorced from the post recognised by the Administration, that of Adhigāri, or headman of the Revenue Village. The powers of the latter office have been increasingly circumscribed by the Administration, and he is now little more than a clerk, Revenue Village courts having been abolished. Often an immigrant occupies this office; thus in Nulpura the Adhigāri is an immigrant Tiyyar, and a Moplah, or Malabar Muslim, acted in an adjacent village until recently.

The Adhigāri does not control all the village servants. He controls two peons or beadles (s'ipai) who are State employees, but

not the office of village washerman, which remains in the power of the traditional landlord as owner of the village temple. In controlling the washerman's services as well as temple offices among the subordinate castes, and also among Brahmins where these are employed, the landlord continues to occupy a position at once apical and central in the local traditional structure. Caste disputes tend to be channelled towards his office. Disputes over property go to the Adhigāri, but ultimately they all go to a magistrate, as of course do criminal offences.

At this point it will be as well to say something of what is meant by caste, by caste dominance, and by authority. Srinivas (1) has recently defined caste dominance in the following words: "Numerical strength, economic and political power, ritual status, and western education and occupations are the most important elements of dominance. Usually the different elements of dominance are distributed among different castes in a village. When a caste enjoys all or most of the elements of dominance it may be said to have decisive dominance." In feudal Wynad and Malabar the Nayar group of castes had decisive dominance, or came close to it. In association with the extremely small sub-castes of Kshatriyas and Sāmantans from which the princely families came, they formed a numerous and armed aristocracy (2). The Brahmins, numerically few, were not free from their secular control although their ritual status was higher.

1) M. N. Srinivas, 1959, p. 15.

2) An excellent account of the Nayar role in feudal Malabar exists in E. J. Miller's article "Caste and Territory in Malabar"; American Anthropologist, 1954.

Use of the term "caste" or "caste relations" inevitably involves ambiguities, which the use of auxiliary terms such as sub-caste, caste system, inter- or intra-caste relations cannot entirely eradicate. Thus I have talked of the Nayars as a caste, though in fact a very large number of distinct castes---or sub-castes ---are subsumed under this term, which use of such a term as caste-group or caste-category does little to mitigate. We can think of caste as a social category, or as a system of inter-caste relations, or as a system of intra-caste relations. Descriptive context usually clarifies the meaning, but it is important to be aware of the inherent ambiguities.

Miller defines caste, at least for feudal Malabar, as a "system of relationships between stable groups which are largely interdependent economically and ritually, and which are arranged in a rigid and accepted order of ranking, expressed in almost every phase of their relations." The weakness of this definitions, and of all definitions emphasising ranking , is that it suggests a ladder, in which social relations relations between non-adjacent castes are mediated through the intermediate castes, which is not always the case. The dominant caste, as Srinivas says, stands not merely at or near the head of the ladder, but also in the centre of a web or wheel, so that all inter-caste relations tend to be mediated through the dominant caste. These relationships are often personal relationships of the patron-client order.

In talking of the Nayars as the dominant caste in Wynad it must be realised that they have lost many elements of dominance, though not completely. Nellivayal Nayar (or Kidāv) occupies a

locally apical position in the dominant caste, but his personal loss of economic and political power, and that of the Nayar community in the area, have reduced his role almost to a purely ritual one. However he retains his office, to which is ascribed specific and traditional powers by the local caste groups which claim membership of the traditional caste system. I talk therefore of his authority or formal power (1), since the actual power structure does not coincide with that which the Kurumas (say) may represent as existing. They are of course aware of his loss of power, but sometimes act as though unaware of it. They are uncertain of the precise extent of this loss. They even have an interest in resisting this loss. Similarly I talk of the authority of Kuruma Locality Headmen. While the landlord retained his former power, it was sometimes exerted through this Headman, and the latter was therefore able to manipulate it. This source of power has been lost to the Kuruma Headman, but he may act as though it still existed. He in particular has an interest in buttressing the authority of the landlord. Unequal distribution of wealth among the Kurumas and the acquisition of power in the State system of democratic representation in parliaments and committees has given power to individual Kurumas without authority in the caste structure, but these men often prefer to wield that power through caste Headmen and mediums rather than openly.

The loss of power by the traditionally dominant caste in

1) See Lasswell H. D., and Kaplan A., "Power and Society", 1952, p. 133.

Wynad will obviously have affected the local structure of caste. It has involved a rearrangement of that structure. It has also been lost, not merely to a particular caste, but to the entire structure. In some respects the Administration has assumed it; in others the powerful and numerous Moplah trading community has assumed it. Both Administration and Moplah community are exterior to the local caste system. It is true that many officials are also members of caste groups, but most are recruited from outside the local system.

Perhaps half of the Kuruma population live within the area of the State Colonisation scheme mentioned above, though not all of these hold Colony land. For them the Colony represents the State, with all its unpredictable and arbitrary interference. It was established at the end of the war, and coincided with extensive D.D.T. spraying against malaria. The Kurumas regard this as a "trick", and say: "Government people came round asking if they could enter our huts to spray them, and that all was done for our benefit; and in our simplicity we consented, not knowing that they meant to bring in the Colonists from outside when the malaria was eradicated." Animosity is shown less against individual immigrants than against the Colony administration itself, and less against unofficial immigrants than against the privileged elite of ex-Service Colonists; but there is also feeling against all immigrants, with whose arrival the pressure on land is steadily increasing, and traditional values and the traditional caste structure are being threatened. "Let God show us which is our country, and we will go there" say some Kurumas in disgust. A faint hope persists that one

day the immigrants will all go home and a new Golden Age begin (1).

The role of the Moplahs (with that of the Colony) is discussed more fully in Chapter II. Here it must be said that, though Moplahs have always acted as middlemen and shopkeepers in Wynad, their numbers have greatly increased, and as a community they are regarded (by the Kurumas) as immigrants. Animosity is directed against them in proportion to their economic success. This success directly affects the Kurumas as their clients and customers, and also, with the extension of State intervention, affects them as a community and a caste.

In contrast with the rapid changes taking place about them, the Kurumas appear as a highly conservative community. This is not to say that they are little different from what they were at the end of the feudal period in 1805, but that external circumstances urge them to conservatism, and opposition to many forms of change. In 1805 the Kurumas were tenants of Nayar (or other) landlords. Land was allocated to them, so far as can told, in blocks, one block to each extended or joint family, within which it was reallocated to individuals, or cultivated jointly. The family cultivating that block of land lived in an exclusive hamlet.

The joint family has ceased to exist, though the residential pattern is unchanged. Many Kurumas own their own land, and those

1) Those familiar with India in the decade after independence will remember that a widespread belief existed among the peasantry that the British withdrawal was temporary or conditional. I was often asked whether the British would ever return. The motives prompting particular persons to put such a question must of course remain unknown.

who are tenants often hold their land from the State, or from Muslims, Christians, or Hindus who caste is other than and below that of Nayars. A cash economy has replaced one based on paddy. Cash is procured by hiring out labour, the sale of paddy, of of cash crops. The majority of these cash-crops---coffee, ginger, tapioca and probably pepper also---were certainly not grown by Kurumas before the period 1850-1900. Brideprice is paid in cash where once it was paid in paddy or labour, and is rising steadily in amount. Both sexes wear ornaments of gold or silver, whereas the use of these precious metals was forbidden to the lower castes in feudal times. Mass-produced sonsumer goods and kerosine are increasingly important in Kuruma domestic economy, and require to be paid for in cash. Land can no longer be obtained on service tenures, or tenanted for payments in kind.

These changes have increased Kuruma dependence on the trading communities and on the State. At the same time they have decreased caste interdependence. In respect of the dominant Nayar caste the decline of Kuruma dependence on the Nayar as landholder and that of the Nayar on the Kuruma as his tenant has already been dealt with. It also affects caste interdependence between the subordinate castes. Artefacts were formerly obtained from Urāli smiths and potters; this is becoming infrequent. Kurumas used to parboil and pound paddy for Chetty and Nayar landowners, but today this paddy is treated at rice-mills, usually established by Moplahs and Christian immigrants. In short, the traditional caste organisation is fragmenting, although

ceremonial co-operation persists. In Wynad this is true of both the indigenous and of the all-Kerala castes.

These two categories of castes I regard as forming distinct systems, or structures, linked at the top by Nayars and Brahmins, who operate in both. A tendency for the structures to become exclusive is seen in the Kuruma differentiation of "good" Nayars from others; but among Nayars themselves, this difference is not admitted. The distinction is based primarily on the possession of office in relation to the village temple. "Good" Nayars tend to be those landowners who control the village temple, and their employees in temple or village offices. These include Brahmin priests and Vannān washermen. These also link the Kurumas to the all-Kerala structure, but as they are individual employees of the Nayar janmi, or office-holders appointed by him, I regard the Nayar link between the two structures as the primary one. Kurumas do not employ either Brahmins or washermen domestically.

It is possible to regard the indigenous structure as a local and aberrant caste system, a segment of the all-Kerala system; but it is also possible to regard it in another way, as a loose tribal association. It forms a hierarchy, but co-operation between its component castes has weakened. In part this is due to the greater success of some castes in winning recognition as such from established all-Kerala castes. The Chetties are one of these, and claim to be "Wynad Nayars", though immigrant Nayars and Tiyyars are sceptical about it. Economic and political change have made the Kurumas largely independent of Chetty control, and they now have begun to

question Chetty claims to higher status in the traditional system. They remember that the Chetties (1) immigrated here from Tamilnad long ago, and decry them as "Kongan pariahs", i.e. a low polluting caste from Tamilnad. Thus the stigma of immigrant status is attached to every caste, or almost every caste, claiming to rank above the Kurumas. Thus the Kurumas are largely excluded from the all-Kerala caste structure, and weakening intercaste relations within the traditional regional structure enable us also to regard the Kurumas as a tribe, or as a community moving towards tribalism. In making this distinction, I am thinking in structural rather than cultural terms.

The paradox of Kuruma society as tribal as well as caste is resolved by the coexistence of the third structure, the modern state of Kerala (or indeed, of all India), with its increasingly mercantile economy and democratic political organisation. All Kurumas are involved, willy nilly in this structure, and they derive great benefits from it, although they are less successful in manipulating it than the more sophisticated immigrants from the coast. They denounce the Administration for having destroyed "the old ways", and brought in the immigrants; but at the same time they are aware of the benefits it has conferred. The chief of these is probably greater security in land tenure. The Kuruma tenant is now more independent of his landlord than ever before. This independence

1) There are three castes of Chetties in Wynad, but only one of the three is found in the Kuruma-inhabited area; these are the "Wynad Chetties." "Kongan" is an adjective meaning Tamil.

has enabled them to claim higher caste status in both structures: near-equality with Chetties, and superiority over Tiyyars. Since the latter claim is made across the cleavage between the two structures, it means in effect that each caste is content to regard the other as polluting it. Kuruma economic independence of Chetties and of Tiyyars, as castes, and the imperfect adjustment of ranking between the two structures, makes it theoretically possible for the Kurumas to withdraw into quasi-tribal isolation. The State is their landlord, particularly in the Colony area.

In the face of rapid social change, Kurumas emphasise the persistence and integrity of their own institutions and traditional values. The main locus of these values and institutions is the Kuruma hamlet. This is both an exclusive residential group and an extended family. It forms a ceremonial corporation, worshipping its own gods and Ancestor-spirits, with the head of the extended family acting as priest. A tradition of jointness attaches to part of the property attached to each hamlet, and in chapter III I have argued that, to a limited extent, it is possible to regard the hamlet as a joint family. Kuruma conservatism and the persistence of the hamlet are vitally interconnected.

Among all higher and middle-ranking castes in Malabar, such as Nambudri Brahmins, Nayars, and Tiyyars, their joint family organisations have fragmented into dispersed conjugal families, or into very small lineage groups (1). Their members dispersed to find new

1) The process and its causes have been brilliantly described by Gough, to whose articles I refer in the bibliography. K. R. Unni has also discussed the process in a recent article.

land and new occupations, in commerce or administration. Kurumas are also territorially mobile, but they move only within their caste territory, and then only to seek new land or (occasionally) menial employment. They do not enter commerce or administration, and appear to feel themselves incompetent to try. There are no Kuruma teachers or policemen.

The Nayar joint family has broken down; the Kuruma hamlet persists. This is true of other castes as well, and marks a significant difference between the two categories. Low castes tend to reside in exclusive hamlets where each conjugal family occupies its own hut. High and middle-ranking castes tend to reside by conjugal families, each isolated on its own plot of land. Prestige now inheres in isolating one's residence, but so far hardly a single Kuruma has followed the high-caste pattern (1) and deserted his hamlet. Even wealthy men, members of State Legislatures or other major legislative bodies, have not broken away from the hamlet, though they have built themselves brick and tile houses. These stand incongruously within the hamlet among the thatched huts of the other residents. Nowadays, labour sometimes draws Kurumas from a distance, from various hamlets, but they prefer the inconvenience of a longish walk to and from work to deserting their hamlets. Some, employed on a timber estate in North Wynad, have been offered residence in Estate lines, but all refused it.

1) Perhaps this should be qualified to the "modern high-caste pattern." Of course, great prestige inheres in residence in a Nayar taravad house, but these are falling increasingly into decay, like the substantial "family residences" of Victorian England.

Pressures are now operating to break up the hamlet as the basis of residence. Prestige will probably become one of these. The Administration is concerned to break up the hamlet, and has begun propaganda to this effect, emphasising the risks of fire, and the difficulty in expanding the land holding as the hamlet population increases. However, the hamlet remains intact, though increasing pressure on land, if not other factors, must limit its size and eventually force a dispersal.

State intervention has in fact aided the persistence of the hamlet as a social unit. Legislation has conferred greater security of land tenure on the Kurumas, and in the Colony area this tenure has become actual ownership. The land they hold is compactly sited by their hamlets, and it is still possible (though no longer easy) to add to it, so that an increase in hamlet population can still be met without forcing emigration, or subdivision into uneconomically small holdings. At Nellivayal, the point of saturation appears to have been reached, but land-shortage alone has not yet forced any Kuruma to move away from his hamlet.

Kuruma economy is based on paddy cultivation. They have tried to diversify their economy by growing cash crops on a small scale in the gardens surrounding their hamlets; and from the sale of these they get a little money. Richer Kurumas also get money by selling a paddy surplus, and poorer ones sell their labour. Their access to the mercantile economy is however severely limited; partly through the intervention of a paternalistic Administration, and partly because of Moplah commercial predominance in Wynad.

Coffee is one of the main Kuruma cash-crops. The purchase of this from the grower is a State monopoly, handled through local co-operatives. Until 1951-2 the State Paddy Procurement Organisation also handled the sale of paddy. Since then, private traders have dealt in paddy, and also in cash-crops other than coffee. A majority of these traders are Moplahs. Since 1947, Christians have also entered local trade, and the two communities have a near-monopoly of private trade.

Kurumas are thus kept at the margins of the mercantile economy. They have access to it, but do not operate in it. Poverty, lack of trading skill, and a very definite attempt by the Moplahs to exclude non-Moplahs all combine to limit his access to it. Themmain way in which Kurumas try to manipulate it is by withholding a crop from sale in hopes of a rising market, but their power to do so is limited by their poverty and the need to meet debts of urgency. One Kuruma pepper-grower took his own crop in person to the Calicut market in 1954, and sold it there himself; but he informed me that, allowing for expenses, he made no greater profit than if he had sold it locally; and he did not repeat the action in 1955. Sometimes Moplah middlemen take even the picking process out of the hands of the Kuruma grower by buying his crop on the stem for an agreed price.

Market risks are accepted as a Moplah monopoly. So also is retail trade. Kuruma lack of capital and experience understandably exclude them from shop-keeping, but other Hindu communities also tend to avoid, or accept exclusion from, retail trade. Of the ten or so small shops at Nellivayal, eight are run by Moplahs with Moplah

capital, and the other two by Christians. One local Kuruma owns a small shop in another bazaar, but it is managed by an immigrant Hindu employee. In the larger local bazaar of Sultan's Battery, hardly a shop is not a Moplah one. This lack of diversification in the Kuruma economy emphasises their caste uniformity, even if it does not contribute to caste unity. The fact that economic relations exist with the State as landowner and the Moplah as shopkeeper rather than with other castes underlines Kuruma isolation from the caste system.

This isolation is relative, not complete; and it is a product of recent, even contemporary change, to which the Kurumas have yet to adapt themselves. The economic aspects of this change I treat somewhat marginally, important as they are. In describing Kuruma social organisation I am concerned primarily with ritual and political relations and values, and their persistence in the face of external change. These values continue to bind the Kuruma community into the indigenous caste structure, and to enable the janmi and the caste Headmen to play a political role within that structure, as well as a ritual one. As Forde wrote recently: "...mythical charters and moral codes have their own cultural inertia whereby they can retard or guide adaptation in other fields." (1)

Kurumas are aware of their own isolation, and justify their conservatism and reluctance to adapt their institutions by reference to their own basic concept of Order, in the sense of ordo naturalis, and its antithesis Disorder or chaos. Cultural

1) Forde, D., Introduction to "African Worlds," 1954, p. viii

innovation is subsumed under the latter term. They are conceived of as being in perpetual opposition, each being the essential complement to the other, as were Order and Chaos in mediaeval European thought. Within the society at all times, and within any segment of it at a period of equilibrium, Order is the dominant force; whereas the subordinated force of Disorder is constantly seeking to overthrow it. It can do this through the sins of men.

The two forces are identified with the two opposing forms of organisation. The patrilocally organised hamlet represents Order; the matriclan and any matrilateral connection potentially represent Disorder, since they are felt to threaten hamlet solidarity. Probably the Kurumas think of this aspect when they assert that "only we have Order and Disorder!" (1). Obviously concepts of order must exist in every society, but it is true that no other community in Wynad used these terms with like complexity of connotation. Nayars and others from coastal Malabar informed me that these terms were new to them.

Situations in which these concepts are valid are, loosely speaking, all ritual situations. A breach of order, which may be disobedience to an elder, incest, or having a Western-style haircut, is a sin, and involves the risk of supernatural punishment. This may follow automatically, or it may be invoked by an elder. The punishment may fall on the offender, or it may fall on his close kin. Order also extends to intercaste relations, and particularly to those involving indigenous castes, and the janmi. The notion of Order

1) Order is kīlevāram in the vernacular, and Disorder is mēlvāram. The terms are explained subsequently.

therefore validates traditional caste relations and tends to bind Kurumas into the traditional caste structure. Insofar as there is disharmony between this structure and the all-Kerala caste structure, Kuruma isolation and cultural peculiarity are stressed.

I ii. Kuruma and Kurumba.

The term "Kurumba", in various forms or qualified in various ways, is applied to discrete caste and tribal societies found over wide areas of south India, but principally in Mysore and along the Western Ghats. As Professor Furer-Haimendorf remarks in his account of three of these societies: "Kurumba is one of those tribal names which have done so much to obscure the ethnic picture of many Indian regions." (1). No intensive study exists of any of these communities apart from that of the Mullu Kurumas of Wynad made by the writer, but there are many brief accounts and discussions scattered through various Gazetteers, Reports, learned journals and other works.

Ethnographers of the late 19th Century, under the influence of crude theories of diffusion and evolution, saw a common origin for all groups known as Kurumbas. They are supposed to have lived in Tamilnad as a highly organised society overthrown eventually by the Cholas, who called them kurumbu on account of their cruelty (2). Another theory identified them with the Pallava dynasty, explaining the existence of collecting and hunting societies within the Kurumba category in terms of degenaration. The latest restatement of the theory of a common origin is that by V. R. R. Dikshitar (3).

1) "Ethnographic notes on some communities of the Wynad." Eastern Anthropologist IV, 1, p. 19. 1952.

2) Kurumbu means, in Tamil, cruelty or wickedness. Dr. C. Minakshi says of the Pallavas: "There is no demonstrable connection between them and the Kurumbas, the latter being a separate tribe owing allegiance first to them, then to the Cholas." "Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas", p. 12. Madras 1938.

3) "Prehistoric South India", p. 145; Madras 1951.

A close ethnic link between all the groups known as Kurumbas is certainly possible; but since no real anthropometric study of the question has ever been made, little can usefully be said on the matter. From the viewpoint of the social anthropologist the groups appear to be widely different, and fall into two major categories: various small tribal societies scattered along the Western Ghats, and a much more numerous congeries of castes inhabiting parts of the Deccan plateau, chiefly in Mysore. The latter seem physically identical in type with the average Mysorean whereas many of the tribal Kurumbas look to be of a more "primitive" physical type.

"Kuruba", the Kannada form of Kurumba, is applied to a Kannada-speaking caste of cultivators, shepherds and weavers found all over Mysore, and numbering about half a million. Iyer mentions three major endogamous divisions among them, the Halu, Ande, and Kambli Kurubas, but many other prefixes occur, including Mullu, which may have a regional basis or define distinct sub-castes (1). In the forests on the south-west boundary of Mysore are found three or more distinct tribal societies, collectively known to Kannada-speakers as Kādu-Kurubas, Forest Kurubas. These are the Mullu (thorn or bamboo) Kurubas or Kurumas, the Betta Kurubas, and the Jēnu Kurubas, the last two prefixes meaning "hill" and "honey" respectively. Many of them live in Malabar, and Malayalam-speakers refer to them by a somewhat different nomenclature. Betta Kurubas

1) Anantakrishna Iyer, L.K. The Mysore Tribes and Castes, 4 vols., Mysore 1928-36; under "Kuruba" and "Kadu Kuruba".
Mateer and others suggest that "Korava", the nomadic caste of the Deccan, may also be cognate with Kuruba. So also may the caste known as Kuramwar in the Central Provinces.

are called Uralis, Jenu Kurubas Naikas, and Mullu Kurubas simply Mullu Kurumas. All further consideration will be limited to these societies, and in particular to the Mullu Kurumas.

Kurumba is a Tamil word of debated etymology. Oppert (1) suggests that it derives from the root ku meaning a mountain, as in the term for Parvathi, "Sri Kurumba", Lady of the Mountain. The word is also used to mean a Hill chieftain, and Dr. A. Aiyappan in a personal communication himself prefers this derivation or association. However, not all these communities refer to themselves as Kurumbas. The Betta and Jenu Kurubas may use a form of the word when speaking to outsiders, but among themselves they employ such neutral phrases as "our people", "our caste", "we". The Mullu Kurumas use the term "Kuruma" among themselves, but never "Kurumba." Thus a woman speaking of her husband may refer to him as "my Kuruman" while the husband uses the feminine referent "Kurumathi".

It appears to the writer that the Malayalam form "Kuruma" is probably derived from kuru or kurum, meaning small or short; thus "Kuruman" would mean Little Man, or Dwarf. The Mullu Kurumas are in fact only slightly below the average height in Malabar, but the adjective is likely to be one implying deprecation or contempt; "little man" in the sense of being poor, humble, or backward. This attitude is much what one might expect from conquering immigrants from the kingdoms of coastal Malabar towards primitives. It finds

1) Quoted in Thurston; "Castes and Tribes..." III 441.

its antithesis in formal face-to-face relations, when the term of address from non-Kuruma Hindu to Kuruma is "Muppan" (Headman). Similarly perhaps the Jēnu Kurubas are "Naikas", meaning Leader or Chieftain, while Urāli may mean Village Headman.

"Forest Kurubas" have been described by writers from Buchanan (1807) and Dubois (1816) onwards. The latter writes, in Beauchamp's translation: "These savages live in the forests, but have no fixed abode. After staying a year or two in one place, they move on to another. Having selected the spot...they surround it with a kind of hedge, and each family chooses a little patch of ground, which is dug up with a sharp piece of wood hardened in the fire. They sow small seeds (= millet), and a great many pumpkins, cucumbers and other vegetables; and on these they live for two or three months in the year. They have little or no intercourse with the more civilised inhabitants of the neighbourhood."

This account is a fair description of Betta Kuruba or Jēnu Kuruba economy as it existed down to a generation ago, or even today, but no distinction is made between the two communities, nor is mention made of the far more elaborate economy and organisation of the Mullu Kurumas, as it appears today (1).

It is possible, though extremely unlikely, that only minor differences then existed. It is true that Thurston, writing in the first decade of this century, also minimises the differences (2), but the account of C. Gopalan Nair (3), a younger contemporary of Thurston

1) Dubois, tr. Beauchamp, 3rd edition, p. 76-7. Buchanan was the first to distinguish between "Forest Kurubas" and Plains Kurumbas.

2) Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 1909.

3) Wynad, its peoples and traditions, 1911.

and employed for a time in Wynad on the Taluk administration, makes clear what Thurston overlooks: that the Mullu Kurumas even then were a sedentary cultivating society, with a social organisation widely different from those of the other two tribes. Mullu Kurumas tradition and memory, as well as land records, make it certain that they were sedentary cultivators in 1885, and probably for long before that (1).

The Mullu Kurumas, or Kurumas as I shall call them, are a Malayalam-speaking group about 10,000 strong, practising paddy-cultivation, and found only in a compact area of Malabar Wynad and the adjacent tracts of Nilgiri Wynad. Here they live patrilocally in small exclusive hamlets, interspersed with the hamlets and houses of other communities, including those of Urālis and Naikas (2). They have usually been considered as a tribe, and are officially described

1) Probably Dubois never entered the Wynad, and so did not encounter any Kurumas. Thurston refers to his "rambles in the Wynad", and secured anthropometric material from about twenty Kurumas; but his "rambles" may have been in those large tracts of Wynad where no Kurumas live; perhaps he met his "specimens" on Estates.

2) No official figures of the number of Mullu Kurumas under that name have ever appeared; but they probably appear under "Kuruman", a Malayalam-speaking Depressed Caste and Primitive Tribe of Malabar. The Census for the period 1881-1931 shows these totals:-

Year	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Malabar	3,675	12,891	10,092	9,772	10,988	10,447
Madras Presidency	3,675	16,857	10,092	9,772	10,988	10,447

Of the 1931 total, 9,817 were said to live in Wynad, 533 in Walavanad, none in Gudalur-Wynad. In fact about 500 live there, but none could be discovered in Walavanad. The total of 10,447 is made up of 5,560 males and 4,887 females. This male preponderance corresponds closely with the overall proportion between the sexes in Wynad; the only Taluk in Malabar in which males outnumber females.

My own estimate of a population total of 10,000 is based upon an extensive personal survey, which I was able to check against the official village (amsam) statistics for certain villages. The Census no longer publishes castewise population statistics.

As such by the Administration. They could with equal accuracy be regarded as a caste, and in this thesis I have regarded their internal organisation and culture and the nature of their external relations as primarily of caste type. The argument for this point of view is briefly that, in India, the terms tribe and caste should be used as indicators of the degree to which localised communities isolate themselves from, or identify themselves with, the regional caste structure and its values. Isolation and identification can be controlled by the action of external communities as part of a process of conquest or colonisation. Definition of the region as the area of maximum intercaste relations therefore becomes important. The isolation of Wynad enabled a regional caste structure to evolve there in which the Kurumas found a place. The recent ending of this isolation has broken down that structure and isolated the Kurumas from the caste structure of the wider linguistic region, now Kerala State. (1)

Of the various indigenous communities on the Wynad plateau, all are comparatively small, and many are not only restricted to Wynad but are highly localised within it; whereas the immigrants castes from the Malabar coast are numerous and extensively distributed, not only in

1) The Nilgiri tribes have always been accepted as tribes, but as Emeneau and Mandelbaum have shown, they formed collectively an abbrrant caste system, or tribal association of caste type. Rivers over-emphasised their isolation from the surrounding plains, and from Hindu culture. This emphasis on isolation seems inherent in the single-community study, though its dangers have lessened since Rivers described the Todas in 1906.

Wynad, but in the rest of Malabar or of Kerala. However, the existence of monolithic caste-groups, such as the Nayars for instance, is a modern phenomenon, a product of economic and social changes in the last century or so. It has been shown, notably by Gough and Miller, that a critical factor in the caste structure of pre-British Malabar was the localisation of marriage in terms of the then existing political boundaries. A Nayar might not marry outside the kingdom or chiefdom to whose ruler he owed allegiance, and among lower castes the territorial range of marriage was progressively more restricted. The only castes whose members might marry across the boundaries of kingdoms were the Brahmins and, to a lesser extent, the princely castes of Kshatriyas and Sāmantans. There was then, in effect, a separate caste structure peculiar to each kingdom. If we accept this hypothesis, then in the tmaditional caste structure the Mullu Kurumas, instead of forming a highly localised minority of 1% of the total Malabar population, form the much larger group of 10% of the population of the old kingdom of Wynad; a group which is a part of the local caste and political system, of which their own political system is an articulation.

In examining the scale and importance of the external political economic and ritual relations of the Kuruma community, the first subject for consideration must be the cataclysmic legend of their conquest and organisation by the Kottayam Raja and his Nayars, who ruled feudal Wynad. This legend, which is recounted in a later section, is represented as having occurred with the same dramatic suddenness and finality as (say) the conquest of England by William of Normandy.

Regardless of its historical truth, it marks for the Kurumas the point in time at which they ceased to be a tribe and became members of an incipient caste organisation. The change is marked by a change of nomenclature; before the conquest Kurumas say that they were Vēdans, that is, savage hunters without knowledge of "good" or "proper" customs, living a nomadic existence supported by hunting and by a little millet cultivation.

The conquest legend embraces every community in Wynad, except the Moslems and Christians. At the heart of it is an assembly of these communities, or rather of the undifferentiated Vēdans, and their massacre by the Raja and his Nayars. During the massacre the Raja, seeing one group of survivors fleeing for their lives through a patch of thorny bamboo jungle (mullu), called them Mullu Kurumas (1). Others who fled down a slope (kundu) he called Kundovadiyas, while those who ran through a village (ūr) he called Urālis---and so on (2). Later the Raja is said to have accorded an official caste status and role to each of these newly-differentiated groups, to have introduced such customs as the use of the services of Malayali washermen to remove ritual pollution, and even to have introduced paddy cultivation. It is a legend that Kuruma elders never tire of retelling.

By comparison with the Betta and Jēnu Kurubas, the Mullu Kuruma community is compact and homogeneous. Malayalam is the only language spoken, and nowhere does the community extend beyond the borders of

1) At some Hindu shrines in Wynad the deity, when possessing a human medium, will refer to the Kurumas as "My two (or four) bits of bamboo (mullangandu)."

2) Versions of the legend are given in C. G. Nair and in Logan (vol. II, appendix on Wynad by Chapu Menon). I was able to collect versions from many informants of several castes.

Malabar; or indeed of Wynad if the recently-formed Taluk of Nilgiri Wynad be excepted (1). The Kurumas account for this by saying that the Kottayam Raja appointed certain river and hill boundaries to their caste territory, to reside beyond which would be an offence punishable by outcasting. In fact to settle at any distance beyond them would deprive a Kuruma of certain essential ritual services and put him beyond the protecting influence of his locality gods and Ancestors. In contrast with this, Betta and Jēnu Kurubas are found over a much wider area, though they are more thinly scattered (2). Both Kuruba communities exist in Coorg, Mysore and the Nilgiris, as well as in the Malabar Wynad, and both speak dialects of Kannada which contain many Tamil forms. These dialects are incomprehensible to Mullu Kurumas; but in Wynad, the only area where Kurumas and Kurubas are in contact, the lingua franca is Malayalam, the predominant language of the area, and the language of the dominant caste (3).

It has been mentioned that Malayalam-speakers of Wynad refer to Jēnu Kurubas as Naikas and to Betta Kurubas as Urālis. While Urālis and Betta Kurubas are basically identical, they can also be seen to

1) Ward and other 19th Century writers mention "Mulu Curumbers" as living on the southern or eastern slopes of the Nilgiris, and some Censuses assert that Malayalam-speaking Kurumas live in the Attapadi area of Walavanad or Ernad. Nothing could be discovered of these groups, and V. Raghaviah ("The Irulas", Delhi, 1949) in his book on the Attapadi tribes does not mention them.

2) Illustrative maps are given at the end of this chapter.

3) According to the 1951 Census, just over 9,000 persons in Malabar Wynad speak Kannada as their first language. Besides the Kurubas, the Edanādan and Mandādan Chetties, and the Adiyas speak forms of Kannada. The Wynad Gaundans, a wealthy caste of Nayar status, also speak Kannada but are numerically few.

form distinguishable communities between which minor cultural differences exist, at least in Wynad. Those who call themselves Urālis imitate the practices of the low-caste Malayali and live as labourers on the open lightly-wooded hillsides of central Wynad; whereas the Betta Kurubas of the forests on the Malabar-Mysore border raise their own crops of millet and perform seasonal labour for the Forest Authority. They also continue to act as blacksmiths and potters (1); and they speak only Kannada, whereas the Urāli is bilingual in Kannada and Malayalam, and regards the latter language as having a higher prestige value. The two groups continue to intermarry, but many informants asserted that such marriage were exceptional: "We marry only into our own group"; "the others are of lower caste than we are", and so forth. This attitude is recippocal, the Betta Kuruba regarding the "more civilised" Urāli as a degenerate who has forsaken the tribal way of life.

A similar distinction can be made between Jēnu Kurubas and Naikas, the former being forest-dwellers with a mixed economy that varies between food-collecting, shifting cultivation, and labour for the Forest Department, while the latter are hired labourers and were formerly agrestic serfs (2). The latter say of the former: "They live in the forests and eat monkeys, and are of very low caste!"----the monkey is of course sacred to Hindus. This practice of eating monkeys

1) Men are smiths, women potters, but few now practise these crafts. Malayalam-speaking Uralis often appear to act as agents for the wares of Betta Kuruba craftsmen in central Wynad.

2) The 1828 report on slavery says (p. 847 ff.): "The jenm value of a good slave of Mopen and Naiken tribes is 64 silver fanoms..... but the females of these tribes are not sold or given for pattom." The former tribe is presumably the caste of Muppans, of whom a number exist in Wynad.

is made the basis for a distinction into two separate communities by Dr. Aiyappan, which he calls the Jen Kurumbars and the Kattunayakans (kattu or kādu = jungle, nāyakan = Naika(n)). By his account, a very brief one, the latter eat monkeys but the former do not (1). However Sanderson, who lived for very many years in the area, asserts that the "Kurrabas" (i.e. Jēnu Kurubas) of Kākanakōta on the Mysore-Wynad border do in fact catch and eat Langur monkeys. (2). This agrees with my own information. The "civilised" Naikas of Wynad do not eat monkeys, and refer contemptuously to their Jēnu Kuruba kinsmen as Maccha Kurubas, Monkey-Kurubas.

This dichotomy in the two Kuruba communities is most easily explicable in terms of cultural aspiration. There is no structural division in either tribe, but there is cultural polarity. The Urālis are torn between the desire to be members of the Malayali caste-system of Wynad and the desire to remain united with the Betta Kuruba community of Mysore, from which some of their wives are drawn and into which some of their sisters may marry. In process of time this conflict may resolve itself with the formation of separate endogamous sub-castes, but that stage has not yet been reached. However in this study, which is limited to Wynad, I have considered only the Urālis and the Naikas, as being members of the Wynad caste structure.

Their membership of the structure however is less complete than is that of the Kurumas. They have not severed their relations with their kinsmen in Mysore; Malayalam is still only a second language for

1) Aiyappan A., p. 101.

2) Sanderson P. G. "Thirteen Years among the Wild Beasts of India," 1878, pp. 210-1.

them; and not all of them have yet adopted the white clothing typical of Malabar--- in Mysore coloured clothing is usual. They preserve a myth relating their own creation, and though they may know the legend of conquest by the Malabar Raja it means much less to them than does the myth. The Mullu Kurumas conversely emphasise the legend but have no myth of their own origin---or indeed any mythology at all (1).

Both Jēnu and Betta Kurubas, Naikas and Urālis, claim descent fromx a pair of original Ancestors, called Hettaya (maternal grandfather) or Ajja (grandfather). These have little in common save the name. The Hettaya of the Naikas, with his wife Ajji (grandmother) have no particular cult-centre. The Urāli Hettaya consist of two brothers and their wives, born from an anthill on the Mysore-Wynad border (2). The elder brother, Nerd'Ajjan, is the progenitor of one of the two exogamous patrilineal groups into which the society is divided, while the younger brother, Sāmbal Ajjan, is the progenitor of the other. The two groups are known as Children of the Three Villages (Mūroli mangane), and Children of the Seven Villages (Yēroli mangane). Urālis, it is said, had to visit the cult-centre of these divine beings with food-offerings annually, or once every few years; but such visits have now been discontinued save by persons living close by the shrine (3). It is not known whether the Betta Kurubas practise or ever did practise this custom.

1) This is an exaggeration, but in fact the Kurumas have almost no mythology of their own, though they have adopted much Sanskritic Hindu mythology, especially that of Shiva disguised as a hunter.
2) North-east of Sultan's Battery, according to local informants.
3) My informants asserted that the two Ajjans had a common shrine, or two shrines closely adjacent. I did not visit them.

The Mullu Kurumas on the other hand emphasise their connection with the locally dominant caste of Nayars, which represents for them an ideal of cultural aspiration. This connection is expressed in kinship as well as in the process of caste naming and ordering attributed to the conquering Raja in the legend. As a gloss to the conquest legend many elders explained that the caste was descended from the union of four of the aboriginal Vēdan girls who survived the massacre, and four Nayar soldiers of the Raja's army. To these unions is traced the origin of the four matriclans into which the caste is divided, and the spirits of the four Nayars are identified with the caste deities known as the Four Keliyappans (1), though not all elders agree upon this point. Somewhat surprisingly there is no association of a particular Keliyappan with a particular matriclan. Comment on this matter will be suspended until the matriclans themselves are considered.

The Keliyappans present a parallel, albeit a distant one, with the Hettayas of the Urālis, since both sets of divine beings are associated with major exogamous units; but unlike the Hettayas, the Keliyappans have no cult-centres, are not associated with particular localities, and as we have said, particular clans are not associated with particular Keliyappans. The Kurumas reside in exclusive hamlets each containing a patrilocal extended family observing a cult of the ancestors as far back as the individual founder, but there is no cult of the Keliyappans, although all four

1) The words keli + appan probably mean spirit-father. They are: Vela (white) Keliyappan, Badhinattan Keliyappan, Munikillan Keliyappan, and Pudhādi Keliyappan or Pūdhalan Keliyar. The latter is usually identified with Pudhādi dēvam (god).

are believed to be immanent in each hamlet. Each hamlet has a cult of certain House-gods, typically three in number; two male and one female. In many hamlets one of the male gods is a Keliyappan, and in some hamlets both of them are, but we never find more than two Keliyappans as House-gods in any one hamlet. Where there is only one Keliyappan House-god in a hamlet he is invariably (or almost invariably) thought to be less powerful than the second male god, who is often said to have been "given" to the hamlet by their Nayar landlord.

There is disagreement whether Pudhādi (or Pūdhalan) Keliyappan is identical with Pudhādi dēvam (god), but many Kuruma exegetists say that he is. Pudhādi dēvam is associated with a taravād of Nambiyars (Nayars) established at Pudhādi in North Wynad. This taravād, which partitioned only very recently and held large properties, is said to have been established at the time of the legendary conquest of Wynad, and is certainly of great antiquity. A "Pudhupādi paddu" or company of Nayar soldiery led by Pudhādi Nayar is mentioned in a local inscription that epigraphists date about the 11th Century A.D. Many Kuruma hamlets in other parts of Wynad which have Pudhādi as a House-god also have a tradition of migration from the Pudhādi area. Yet another Kuruma god, Pākā dēvam, is variously said to be a Keliyappan, to "control all the Keliyappans," and to be the deified spirit of the conquering Kottayam Raja. There is a tract called Pākanād north of Pudhādi with which this god is closely associated, though he is worshipped in Kuruma hamlets in other parts of Wynad as a House-god.

In these claims of Nayar connections, through descent as well as by acceptance of Nayar-given House-gods, it is tempting to see Kuruma acceptance of Nayar overlordship and Malayalam culture expressed in ritual terms. Another Wynad tribal society or caste, the Kuricchiyas, who resemble the Kurumas in their economy and caste status, claim actually to be Nayars (1). They say that they are descended from Nayar soldiers brought to Wynad from Travancore by the Kottayam Raja, but that they forfeited their casse by intermarrying with local women of lower caste. By contrast the Urālis and Naikas make no such claims to a Nayar connection.

Between the Mullu Kurumas and the Urālis there formerly existed, and still persists in some degree, a close economic and ritual relationship analogous to that between the Kotas and Badagas of the Nilgiri hills. In some contexts the nature of this relationship is expressed in the idiom of kinship, it being asserted that "originally the Urālis were the sons of an elder sister while the Kurumas were the sons of a younger sister." In both communities an elder sister takes precedence over a younger, and the statement seems to reverse the relative status of the two castes, since Kurumas rank above Urālis although adjacent to them in the caste structure, and will not take food from them, although Urālis accept cooked food from Kurumas.

At every Ucchar, a Hindu festival held in February that marks the ending of the economic and ritual year, the local Urālis under

1) So also do the matrilineal Kunduvadiyas. Distance-pollution, and even contact-pollution, were in abeyance among Nayars on a military expedition, but permanent sexual union with a low-caste female as opposed to casual relations were not countenanced.

their caste Headman customarily attend the hamlet of the local Kuruma caste Headman, where they dance in a special courtyard for a period of up to 24 hours. When the dancing ends the Urāli Headman presents to the Kuruma Headman a knife and arrowhead made by his own people. In return the Kuruma Headman feasts the Urāli assembly with food collected from the local Kurumas. This exchange is sufficiently explained by the artisan-cultivator relationship in which the two castes stand, for the Kurumas are paddy-cultivators while the Urālis grow only millets and pumpkins, but manufacture both iron implements and pottery, both of which the Kurumas buy from them. It is said that Urali-made arrows and knives are sharper than those bought in the bazaar or from other castes "provided that the Urāli smith was a competent one", and that food cooked in Urāli pots is tastier than that cooked in vessels got elsewhere (1).

Both Kurumas and Urālis say that, before the Nayar conquest, they lived amicably together in Wynad, the former being known as Vēdans and the latter as Aripans. They used to go hunting together, but on one occasion the Vēdans, advised by the god of Kāli Hill, stayed at home and the Urāli-Aripans hunted alone, accompanied by the interfering deity. During their hunt they killed a bison, which they had never done before, and debated whether or not to eat it. The god advised them to do so, and himself pretended to eat the flesh, though in fact abstaining, for bison-flesh counts as beef to a Hindu. A Kuruma today will kill a bison and sell the flesh to Christians, but

1) Urāli artisans now have to compete with immigrant Hindu artisans and Bazaar goods. Urāli pots are thick unwieldy objects, and become very fragile unless carefully dried after use. As makers of arrowheads they have almost a monopoly.

he will not eat it himself. The Aripans were deceived by the god and ate the meat, whereupon the god returned and told the Vēdans what had occurred. When the Aripans returned they discovered that they had been tricked by the god into losing status (or caste), and that the god "favoured the Vēdans more than themselves." Since then the Aripan-Urālis refer to the god as "the Deceitful one."

This story acquires significance in relation to the existing caste structure and the Hindu taboo on beef-eating. In the legendary past the two communities were ranked (if at all) interms of kinship but not of caste. Today the Kurumas are far more deeply engaged in Malabar culture than the Urālis, and the significance of the story seems to be that the Kurumas, by observing the Malabar and All-India Hindu prejudice against beef were able to enter the local caste structure at a higher point in the hierarchy than the Urālis, who ignored it. A somewhat similar story which Kurumas tell is that the Urālis, instructed by Kāli mala dēvam, the identical "god of Kāli hill", all clean their persons with leaves and grass after excretion, whereas Kurumas use water in the Hindu fashion. This story likewise sanctions the Kuruma claim to higher status within the Wynad and Malabar caste systems than that of the Urālis.

The statement that the two castes are descended from two sisters may serve to emphasise the fact that, though interspersed, they have never intermarried; and that both are autochthonous to Wynad and were once of equivalent or proximate status. By contrast the Kuruma-Nayar relation, as expressed in terms of a kinship relation, is one of descent but from Nayar males----Nayars being of course typically

matrilineal. The statement that the Urālis, though now imferior to Kurumas in caste status, may perhaps be a symbolic compensation for this inferiority. Kurumas attribute to Urālis a relatively greater "primitiveness" which is seen as a virtue as well as a disadvantage. They say of them "they are closer to the old ways" or are "closer to god than we are."

The story of the bison is one told by Kurumas rather than Urālis. Today neither Urālis nor Betta Kurubas hunt, although the latter sometimes set traps for the smaller game animals. They do not own or work with domestic cattle, and are said by Kurumas to be afraid of them, and particularly of any leather object, or the bones or hide of dead cattle. They do not eat beef, but Iyer (1) writes of the Betta Kurubas: "those in the Nilgiris and Mysore eat beef, but those in Coorg detest it!" The god of Kāli hill is said to be the original god of "all Wynad", though his cult seems to be restricted to South Wynad. His major cult centre is an uninhabited hill on the Mysore border, in the same area where the mythical progenitors [illegible]e Urālis appeared. When possessing a human medium the god alway[illegible]s in Malayalam, but he is associated with the Kannada-speaking god Bommadan; and I was told that "many Mysoreans visit his shrine, and address him as Basavappa." He is said to be very "mild and easy-going", in contrast with the Keliyappans.

By comparison with the Urālis, Kuruma-Naika relations are sparse. There is a very marked status-difference between them, as one would expect between land-holding paddy cultivators and labourers or collectors. In feudal times and in the first half of the 19th

1) L. A. K. Iyer: "The Coorg Tribes and Castes", Madras 1948, p. 21.

Cemtury many if not all Naikas were agrestic serfs, and some of them were owned or employed by Kurumas----as also were Paniyas. This however is probably a 19th Century development only, and was not the case in feudal times. Traditionally the Kurumas held customary but annually renewable tenancies of land from Nayar landlords, but in the last century some became outright owners of land, and therefore of slaves also, since most slaves were attached to land. Few Kurumas nowadays employ either Paniya or Naika labour, but links still remain between the descendants of former serfs and the hamlets of their former owners or employers. Such descendants often attend the hamlet at the Ucchar festival; it is their duty to prepare the courtyard for the Urāli dance; and if at any time they fall sick they may seek supernatural aid from the gods of the hamlet.

There is no evidence that Kurumas were ever enslaved under the Rajas; indeed their status seems to have been comparatively high, for they were employed as auxiliary troops by the Kottayam Rajas. Lewis Rice recounts that, in the latter half of the 18th Century, "a troop of Nair banditti and Mullu Kurubas" entered Coorg, sacked the palace of the Vira Raja, and retired unmolested to Wynad (1). Kurumas also played a part in the "Pyche Rebellion" of 1800-5 and in a brief uprising against the Company administration in 1812 (2). In all these operations theyx were the auxiliaries of military Nayars and Chetties (3), and probably never acted independently.

1) Rice L., "Mysore and Coorg" vol III p. 112, Bangalore 1878.
2) Welsh J., "Military Reminiscences", volII pp. 10-28, 1830.
3) By "military Nayars" is meant individuals of those sub-castes entitled to bear arms. They are also known as "Retainer Nayars."

A few words may perhaps be said here on the physical differences between Kurumas on the one hand and Urālis and Naikas on the other. The former approximate in racial type to the Nayar, with average stature, wavy hair, medium brown skin, prominent nose and robust frame. In many Kurumas the face is strikingly long and narrow, a trait which is accentuated by the traditional Malabar hair-style in which the sides of the head are shaven while that on the crown is allowed to grow freely, and is tied in a knot (min-kuduma) that hangs forward over the left eye or ear.

Urālis and Naikas appear slighter than Kurumas, and more "primitive" of feature. Of the latter (Jēnu Kurubas) Furer-Haimendorf remarks: "They are of small stature and slight build, dark skin, wavy or curly hair, and primitive facial features. Some of them reminded me of Chenchus, and I believe that to sort out Chenchus and Jen-Kurumbas from a mixed crowd would be extremely difficult." (1). The physical similarity of Kuruma and Nayar could well be the result of extensive miscegenation between Nayar men and Kuruma women, for which we find warrant in local traditions about the behaviour of Nayar landlords towards the womenfolk of their Kuruma tenants as well as in the origin legend of the Kuruma matriclans glanced at above.

In the Constitution Order of 1950 both Kurumas and Naikas were declared Scheduled Tribes, and in a recent supplement the Urālis also were included with them. It has been argued in this section that in fact all three societies can be regarded also as castes, though

1) Furer-Haimendorf, op. cit. p. 20.

the Kurumas have entered the local caste system to a greater degree than the other two. This is not to deny that all retain certain tribal characteristics, but to assert that the caste characteristics predominate, more particularly with the Kurumas, and these latter characteristics have a heightened relevance in the present study.

The criteria distinguishing tribe from caste can be summarised thus:

1. Exclusive possession of territory, with minimal interdigitation of other societies, is a tribal characteristic. This does not hold for any of these societies, unless the forests on the Mysore border be taken as territory more or less exclusive to the Betta and Jēnu Kurubas.
2. A high degree of cultural isolation, of economic and political independence. This is a corollary of the first point, which implies physical isolation. Hindu deities, religious beliefs and prattices, and the employment of Brahmins or a display of respect for them should be eschewed or occasional.
3. Tribal economy tends to be less complex and specialised than in a caste organisation, with land often held through a clan or like group in such a way that all members enjoy am equal degree of access to the land. In a caste system land tends to be monopolised by the higher castes; the highest castes owning it, middle castes renting it from them, and the lowest castes cultivating it as serfs or labourers.
4. Within a tribe social organisation tends to be on the basis of kinship or of clanship, all members being political equals (or potentially so), and regarding others as either brothers

or as affines. Within a single caste, agnation is important, but in a caste system---that is, a collocation of mutually interdependent castes---the organising principles are hierarchy, specialisation, and a feudal political organisation in which the ownership of land is vested largely or exclusively in the hands of a single politically dominant caste or association of castes. It is theoretically possible to find a single isolated tribe, but impossible to have an isolated caste. Castes can exist only in ordered opposition; and this, like hierarchy, presupposes plurality.

These criteria imply the classic "rigid" or "feudal" caste system, with strict territorial segmentation by villages, chieftaincies, and kingdoms. In present-day Malabar this system has long been moribund, and in Wynad the traditional intercaste village community has virtually ceased to exist (1). New composite castes are emerging, extending to the limits of the linguistic and cultural region, i.e. to the limits of the new State of Kerala.

The two most powerful and most numerous of such associations are those of the Nayars and of the Iravas, but the Nambudri Brahmins and the washerman caste of Peruvannāns also have such organisations. The Irava, or Tiyyar, association (2) was founded at the beginning of the present century, and the Nayar Service Society some twenty years later. Both were intended as non-political

1) Compare E. J. Miller in "India's Villages", p. 50: "...it is very difficult nowadays in Kerala to point to any unit as a clearly demarcated, coherent, independent village community."

2) Entitled the Srī Nārāyana Dharma Paripālana Yōgam, which may be rendered as "The Lord Vishnu Protection Association."

organisations concerned with social uplift, and the Tiyyar Yogam was intended to recruit from every caste. The slogan of Swāmi Narayanan, its Irava founder, was: "one caste, one religion, one god;" and some of his leading disciples were Nayars. A similar catholicity informed the early years of the Nayar Society. The 1931 Cochin Census remarks on the lack of "caste patriotism" among Nayars in Cochin, and in Travancore we are told of Nayar social workers resolving that "all who can speak Malayalam shall be admitted to the Nayar caste" (1).

The formation of these associations coincided with, and encouraged, the breakdown of endogamous and ceremonial barriers between sub-castes within the two major caste groups of Nayar and Tiyyar. They also emphasised the territorial spread of these caste groups throughout the linguistic region, and the desirability of recruitment to the limits of that region, now the State of Kerala. The Tiyyar Yogam was founded in southern Travancore, and still draws its main strength from the south; but in his lifetime Swāmi Narayanan founded temples and local associations in Calicut, in Tellicherry, and even as far north as Mangalore. He died in 1928, and his anniversary day is observed (principally by the Tiyyars) as a regional holiday.

Both associations have now entered the field of politics, and in practice restrict their membership to the limits of the caste group, though willing to make alliances with other, smaller caste

1) Census of Travancore, 1931, I, 367.

associations of comparable kind. Thus, the Nayar Society recruits from all the Nayar sub-castes----Nayars, Nambiyars, Menons, Kidāvs---- to the limits of Kerala State, but not outside them. The Tiyyar organisation recruits from Tiyyars in Malabar, and from the equivalent castes of Iravas and Chōvans in Travancore and Cochin. These, like the Nayars, were until fairly recently, a congeries of localised sub-castes; the Travancore Census of 1891 reported the existence of 22 Irava sub-castes in that State, but these had been reduced to a single one by 1931. Both Nayar and Tiyyar organisations are less prominent in Malabar than further south, and less prominent again in Wynad than in coastal Malabar; but this situation has lately been changed by immigration into Wynad of considerable numbers of Travancoreans.

In modern Kerala there is now intense rivalry between Nayars and Tiyyars, which is focussed and given political expression in terms of the modern State government and administration, by these two caste associations. During the political crisis of 1959, the "Hindu" newspaper reports prominent speakers at a Nayar conference in Mavelikkara as saying that the Irava community "has stolen a march on us, and will swamp us if we don't beware." In May of that year Mr. Kelappan the well-known Gandhian social worker began a lengthy fast at Tirunavayi in Malabar against "Nayar-Irava conflict over the Education Act." This Act, passed by the Communist Government though not brought into effect, proposed not only to secularise the schools, but to extend educational concessions within the Tiyyar-Irava

caste on the grounds of their being a backward community. In fact they are one of the more advanced communities of Kerala, but it is generally supposed that the Tiyyar Yōgam supports the Government while the Nayar Society opposes it. This seems indeed to be the case, though it does not imply anything like a complete correlation between caste affiliation and party affiliation.

In June of that year the "Hindu" goes on to report Mr. Padmanabhan, the octogenarian founder of the Nayar Society, as telling a "vast assembly" of Nayars at Palghat that they should oppose the whole system of educational concession and reserved State posts for backward groups, as it would enable them to compete against Nayars on the basis of privilege instead of ability. This meeting was one of a series, which included torchlight processions and displays of horsemanship and sword-fighting, both traditional caste skills. This inspired in Mr. Nambudripād, the Communist Chief Minister, some sarcastic references to "Mr. Padmanabhan and his Nayar cavalry." Further discontent arose over proposed land reforms, outbreaks of violence occurred, and finally Delhi imposed Presidential rule on the State. In effecting the fall of the Communist government, the Nayar Society, in alliance with Christian and Muslim communal organisations, played an important part.

By comparison with these monolithic caste associations, the Kurumas are politically an insignificant group, restricted to a single Taluk of Kerala State. They are becoming aware of their isolation and

relative fewness, and a small number of them are pressing for a comparable organisation in Wynad, to include their own and like communities. But the elders, followed passively by a majority of the caste, oppose this idea; and seek security and higher status in terms of the moribund caste system established in Wynad under the Rajas. In doing so, they in fact emphasise the uniqueness and political isolation of the community, and renew its tribal character (1).

Recent legislation has emphasised the backwardness and low social status of the Kurumas in declaring them a Scheduled community, a category which includes the former serf castes of Naikas and Paniyas, but not the higher-caste Chetties or Padhiyas. The Kurumas resent this bracketing, although taking advantage of the privileges which it offers in education, employment, and representation. Kuruma reformers envisage a caste association including themselves, Chetties and Padhiyas, but excluding all lower castes. Their numbers and relatively great sophistication have given them political importance within the indigeneous backward communities, and since 1947 the caste has provided one member of the Madras Legislative Assembly, and two of the Malabar District Board.

To conclude: the object of this section has been to describe briefly the three "Kurumba" groups in Wynad, and to relate them to each other and to the local caste system. This seemed a more profitable approach than an extended consideration of the name they bear in common, and share with other South Indian communities: the Kuruba of Mysore, the Kurumo of Orissa, the Koravas of the Deccan, and perhaps

1) Harking back to the past in Kerala is a common reaction, which is expressed by L. A. Krishna Iyer in "Matriarchy in Kerala", an

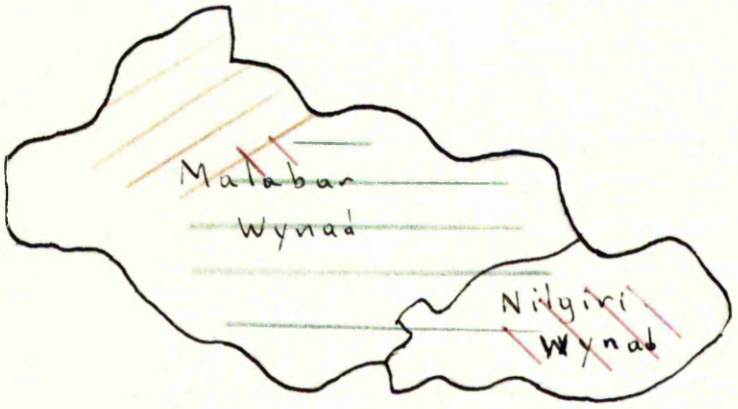
article in Man in India (1944, p. 38), where he suggests that the Nayars should all return to their matrilineal joint family organisations. "....to go back is difficult, but yet the community should go back, or else it is finished and lost."

also the Cherumas of Malabar. The root of the word Kurumba may ku meaning "mountain", kuru or cheru (1) meaning small, or perhaps the word connotes wickedness. But whatever its etymology, its significance seems clear; it describes an "exterior" community and probably implies their cultural inferiority. Its possession offers no basis for a common ethnic or social origin, though the possibility of common origin cannot be ruled out.

1) The "k" in Tamil often changes into "ch" in Malayalam.

Plans showing localised distribution of selected communities in Wynad.

1. Landowning cultivators.



Mandādan Chetties

Wynādan Chetties

Edanādan Chetties

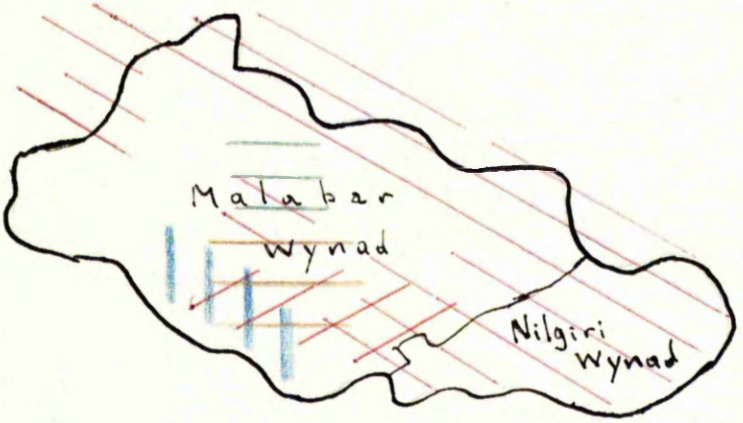
2. Tenant cultivators.

Kuricchiyas

Padhiyas

Mullu Kurumas

3. Shifting cultivators.



Betta and Jēnu Kurubas

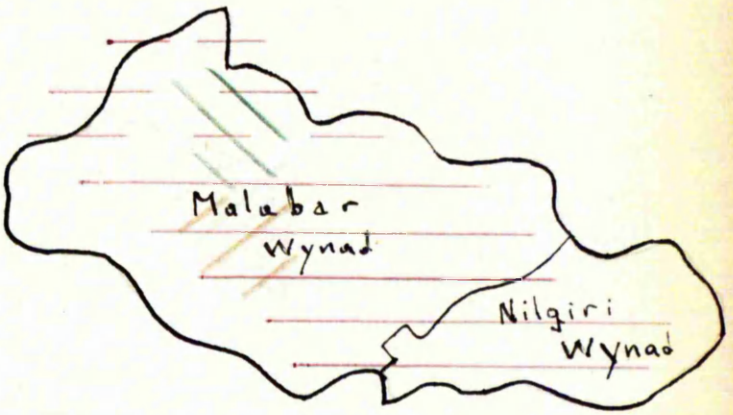
Kundovadiyas

Karimpalas

Thatchanādi Muppans

Kādars

4. Labouring castes.

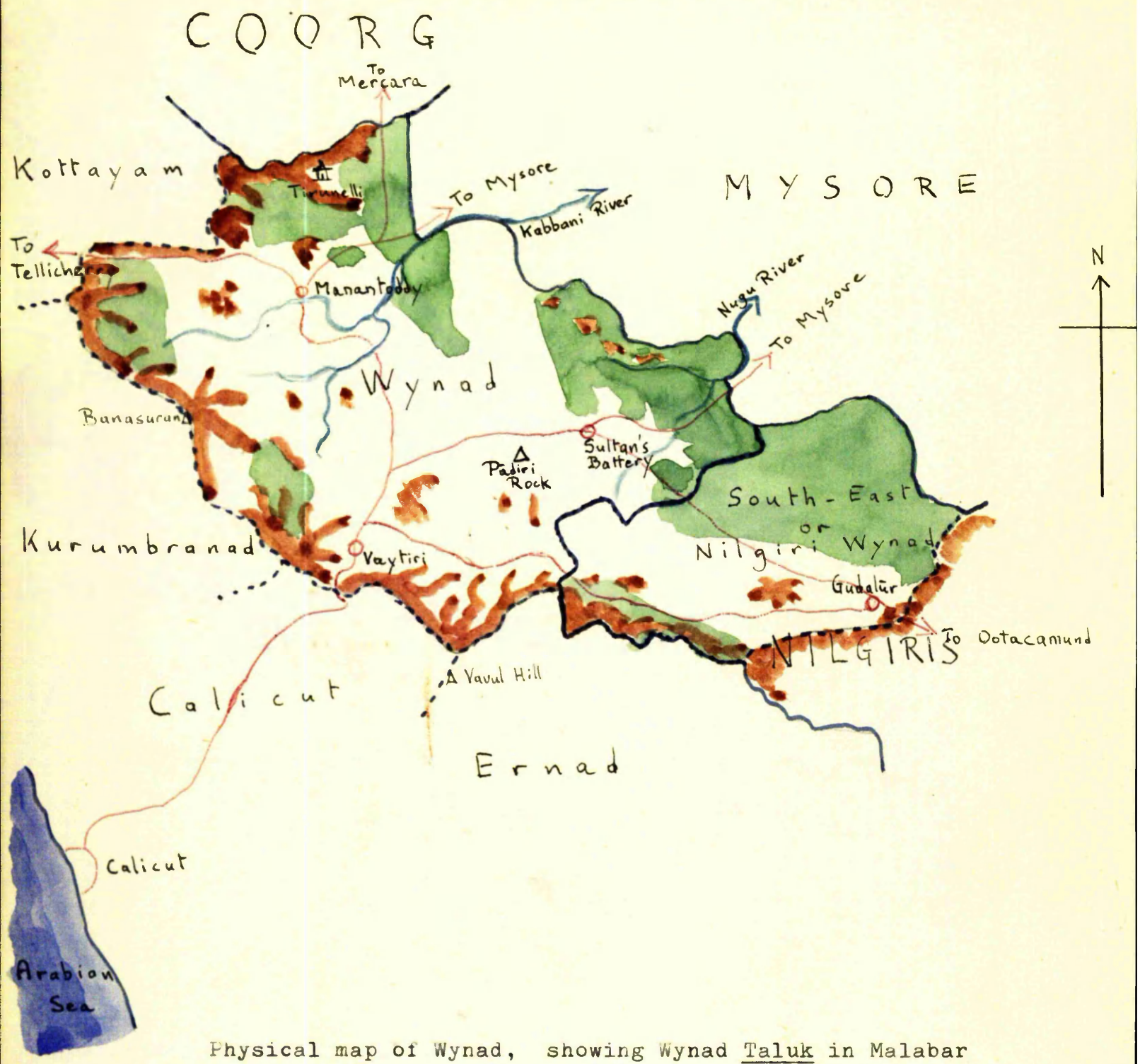


Paniyas

Adiyas

Pulars

Physical Map of Wynad



Physical map of Wynad, showing Wynad Taluk in Malabar District and South-East or Nilgiri Wynad Taluk in Nilgiri District.

Scale: 1 inch = 10 miles.

Key: District or State boundary

Taluk boundary

Metalled road

River

Hill or mountain ridge

Reserve Forest

Bazaar or Town

Temple

Chapter II. The Ecological and Historical Setting.

II i. Wynad as a Natural Region.

The name Wynad, or Vayalnād as it used to be written, means literally Land of swamps and paddyfields. It has been used indifferently to designate a geographical region, the feudal chiefdom which occupied that region before the assumption of sovereignty by the British East India Company, and the modern administrative unit of Wynad Taluk which embraces the larger part of that region. In feudal times the name was also used of a political association of 11 villages within the chiefdom, and from which perhaps the whole chiefdom and region derived the name. This village association survived as a revenue unit under the Company administration until 1822, after which it was progressively divided up into smaller units.

As a geographical entity Wynad is a plateau about 50 miles long and 25 broad, lying between Coorg and the Nilgiri hills in the central sector of the Western Ghats of peninsular India. On the west the Ghats descend abruptly to the narrow coastal plain of Malabar that confronts the Arabian sea. On the east the descent is gradual, the Ghats forming in some places small plateaus like those of Wynad and the Nilgiris, and in others a series of parallel ridges as in Coorg and the Cardomom hills. The isolation afforded by their difficult and mountainous terrain made the Ghats something of a no-man's land politically and culturally, sandwiched between the kingdoms of the west coast and those of the Deccan. Because of this isolation the little state of Coorg was able to retain a measure of autonomy down to 1956, while on the Nilgiri and Wynad plateaux tribal societies have

persisted down to the present day. Wynad is the only Taluk of Malabar District lying entirely above the Ghats, and in it most of the tribal population of the District is concentrated.

The Wynad plateau lies at an average of 3,000' above sea-level; somewhat lower than Coorg and considerably lower than the Nilgiris. On the west and south stands the main ridge of the Ghats, which rise to 7,673' at Vavul hill. The boundary with Coorg on the north is marked by the Brahmagiri ridge (5,277'), while to the south-east the Nilgiris lift abruptly to over 8,000'. Seen from the heights of the Nilgiris Wynad appears spread out below as a tract of almost continuous forest, merging imperceptibly into Mysore on the east. The impression, while telling, is not quite an accurate one. In the centre of Wynad the forest has been largely cleared for cultivation for some centuries past, and from this centre subsidiary clearings radiate outwards along the river valleys, and are being steadily extended. Again, the border with Mysore is marked by a line of low hills, of which the highest is Bear hill (3,802'). From Bear hill a low ridge runs south-west to meet the Ghats, and divided Wynad into its northern and southern halves.

Below its hilly rim the plateau is comparatively flat, with abrupt rocky ridges occasionally breaking its regularity. In general the terrain is one of low whale-back ridges separated by flat-bottomed valleys, many of which have been cleared for paddy cultivation. Round the plateau margin lies a girdle of forest, much of it now Reserved, i.e. Government-owned. Climatic control has dictated a remarkable variety in its character. Along the Ghat margin, where the annual rainfall averages over 160", moist evergreen rain-forest covers the hills, with lofty trees, much undergrowth, and many creepers.

Lying in the rain-shadow of the Ghats, the Wynad plateau proper gets about 100" a year, but this rainfall rapidly declines as we move east. At Heggadadevankote in Mysore, only 12 miles from the frontier with Wynad, the fall is only 25" annually. Along this north-east border with Mysore the forest is deciduous, with many clumps of bamboo and small grassy clearings but with little undergrowth. The existence of this continuous belt of forest, today some 10 or 12 miles wide, and even more its highly malarious character, provided in the past a barrier to communication with Mysore as effective as the Ghat range on the western border.

Wynad has long had a reputation as an unhealthy region. Malayalis from the coast complain of the cold, Mysoreans of the damp, and both of its malarious character. The former have a saying: "If you merely point your finger towards Wynad, that finger will get fever!". The District Forest Officer wrote in 1887: "...the excessive malariousness of the forests in the dry weather wrecks the very strongest constitution in a few months" (1). These statements are borne out by official figures showing that, for the period 1925-30, the death-rate in Wynad was almost twice as high as that for the whole of Malabar District, "fever", i.e. malaria, being by far the commonest cause of death. In 1945, in a selected area of Wynad containing about 10,000 persons, 3,000 cases of malaria were treated, besides many others which were not reported, and about 60 died of it. Reality and reputation combined to limit if not altogether prevent immigration into Wynad until recent years, when the use of DDT dramatically reduced the incidence of malaria.

1) Logan, II, xxxcccv.

Other factors beside climate and disease that discouraged immigration into Wynad were its remoteness and difficulty of access before the modern development of bus-services, its lack of amenities, and the existence of wide jungles harbouring wild beasts and wild tribes. Writing in 1849, the then Collector of Malabar complained: "No Tahsildar of any ability will consent to go there on any consideration." To be be posted to Wynad is still regarded by many Government officials as a misfortune rather than an opportunity.

To a European the climate seems on the whole pleasant and healthy. A cool season with occasional showers lasts from October until February, when the hot season begins. This terminates in April with heavy showers brought by the south-east monsoon, which merges into the rainy period of the south-west monsoon in June. About three-quarters of the total rainfall occur in the period June-October, but March is the only month that may be totally without rain. Malaria is at its worst in the hot season; in the cool and rainy seasons bowel and respiratory diseases are common, possibly induced by the large diurnal variations in temperature which occur. On a sunny February day the shade temperature may reach 100° F., to drop rapidly at sunset to as low as 50° F. Heavy dew accompanies these cold nights, against which the cotton clothing of the peasants offers little protection.

About half of Malabar Wynad is forested, and half of this again is Reserve Forest----134,542 acres, or about 210 square miles. The bulk of the Reserves lie along the Mysore frontier in a wide belt continuous save for one large gap in the Punḍhādi-Pulappalli area where Nayar---and now Muslim---landlords still have vast private holdings. In this area

indiscriminate felling and total clearance, especially by recent immigrants, has greatly reduced the quality and extent of forest; but the State is now (1955) proposing to take over this and other areas still unreserved.

In the past a slash-and-burn cultivation was practised by many of the indigenous peoples, and Richards (1) suggests that the centre of the Taluk, now given over to gardens and paddy-cultivation, was originally cleared of forest by this practise. After the Forest Act of 1882 the Administration made great efforts to end it, but in a modified form it still persists in certain areas. In south and central Wynad it has been stopped altogether, but the burnt-out areas where millets were sown on the hillsides are still distinguishable, being marked by the growth of secondary forest and lantana bushes. In the Kanoth sector of the Ghats small tracts of inferior forest have been assigned to the Kuricchiyas where slash-and-burn may still be carried on, but the allotted area is quite insufficient to support the large number of people who would pursue this economy given the chance to do so. In the Reserves of deciduous forest along the Mysore and Coorg borders many Urāli and Naika tribals are now employees of the Forest Department, which permits them to raise crops of small millets in the coupes or blocks of forest after these have been felled but before replanting. Their slash-and-burn economy is thus being artificially continued in a modified form.

The forest belt encircling Wynad is thus important in many ways.

1) Richards F.J., Indian Antiquary, 1932.

It is a barrier to communication, isolating those within and repelling those without. It forms a harbour for the extensive fauna of the area, and also for the more primitive tribals, some of whom still rely to a great extent on the collection of wild produce or on slash-and-burn cultivation. In the past the forest provided a ready refuge for rebels, criminals, and runaways, thus limiting the power if not the authority of chiefs and landowners to control or punish. This still holds good today in some respects, and bootleggers laugh at Prohibition as they carry arrack from illicit stills or from Mysore arrack-shops along the Forest paths into "dry" Malabar. Commercial timber-felling is an important industry; and the forests also supply timber, fuel, and minor produce to the inhabitants of Wynad, besides cheap grazing to the cattle of those who live within their borders. Despite over-killing since the war, wild animals are still numerous, including elephant and bison, tiger panther and bear, deer and wild pig. Many of the indigenous peoples are, by tradition, hunters; killing for meat and for ritual purposes as well as to protect their crops and cattle. Recent over-killing and other abuses of the forest are attributable less to the indigenes than to the huge number of post-war immigrants. In the Reserves hunting felling and collecting are now severely restricted, but continue with greater intensity round their margins and in private forests as before.

II ii. The Traditional Wynad.

Physically Wynad forms part of the Mysore plateau; politically it has long been an object of competition between chieftains of Mysore, Coorg, and Malabar, though Malayali influences have proved predominant. An inscription of 930 A.D., quoted in Epigraphica Karnataka, shows that at that time the Mysorean Ganga dynasty ruled Wynad, which was divided into two parts, there termed Chāgi and Bīra Bayalnād (1). These probably correspond to the traditional division into a northern and a southern moiety. The inscription describes Wynad as "an adulteress with black waving cnuls, full-moon face, and endless side-glances...this storeyed mansion, the double Bayalnād" (2): a flowery mode of reference which suggests competition for possession between neighbouring rulers, though Mysorean control was at that time established. In different forms this competition has continued until the present day when, in November 1957, Wynad Taluk as part of Malabar joined the new Kerala State while South-East Wynad, despite some protests, remained part of Madras.

The time at which Wynad fell under Malabar political control is uncertain, though the above inscription suggests that it was not before the 10th century A.D. A possible terminus ante quem is provided by the 11th century Tirunelli plates (3), which show that the Tirunelli temple in North Wynad was then controlled by the Raja of the North Malabar

1) These terms are unknown in present-day Wynad. A Vīravayalnād is mentioned in an 11th century Tamil inscription found at Sultan's Battery in South Wynad.

2) W. Francis; Nilgiri Gazetteer p. 91, Madras 1908.

3) Epigraphica Indica, XVI pp. 343-4. Indian Antiquary, XX, 1891. Richards also adopts this date.

kingdom of Kottayam. A comtemporary inscription at Sultan's Battery in South Wynad refers to local Nayar chieftains (1), so that Nayar control clearly covered a large part of Wynad if not the whole of it.

Local tradition, recorded about 1800 A.D. by Mackenzie's scribes and confirmed from present-day oral sources, asserts that in the remote past Wynad was inhabited by Vedans and Aripans, and ruled by a Vedan Raja. The Vedans---the word means a hunter or savage---were "wild and naked savages, who....lived by hunting; they were ignorant even of the existence of any god....and free from guile." (2) They are said to have been warlike, and to have had a fort or forts, of which the principal one was at Veliyambom near Pudhādi. At the present day several hilly sites scattered over Wynad are known as Vedankōta or Fort of the Vedans; and indigenes assert that on Fridays, a day auspicious for hunting, the cries of supernatural hunters and the barking of their dogs can be heard from under the ground at these places.

Tradition states that the conquest of Wynad by two rulers from coastal Malabar took place in the following circumstances. The Raja of Kumbla, a petty state at the northern extremity of Kerala, went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Vishnu at Tirunelli in North Wynad. In passing through the territory of the Vedan Raja, he and his attendants were taken and brought before the Vedan. The latter then demanded that the Kumbla Raja should marry his daughter; or in some versions, that he himself should be given the hand of the Kumbla Raja's daughter. Such an alliance seemed out of the question to the Kumbla Raja, who claimed to be a Kshatriya, since it implied near equivalence of caste and of

1) This inscription, in the grounds of the Mariamma temple, was translated for me through the kindness of the Government Department of Epigraphy. 2) Mackenzie Mss., Tamil Ms book no. 11.

political status between the two Rajas, if not actual subordination of captive to captor as his feudatory. The Kumbla Raja therefore temporised, seeming to agree but asking for one month's grace in order to make fit preparation. Meanwhile a request for rescue was secretly despatched to the neighbouring Rajas of Kottayam and Kurumbranad in North Malabar. These Rajas arrived with their armies on the wedding-day to find the Vedans disarmed and assembled to celebrate the marriage, and proceeded to massacre them. The whole Wynad was then occupied and colonised by Kottayam and Kurumbranad, the former taking North Wynad and the latter South.

The boundary between their territories followed roughly the watershed between Nugu and Kabbani, the two principal streams which drain the Wynad, a prominent feature on the divide being the huge crag called Pādiri Rock. This division into two kingdoms existed until the British domination, and has re-emerged in 1957 when Wynad Taluk was divided into Manantoddy (north) and Vaytiri Taluks (south), the new administrative boundary following roughly the old feudal one. (1)

The Mullu Kuruma community lies astride this boundary, which they refer to in relation to Pādiri Rock, the traditional point of demarcation agreed on by the Rajas. Kurumas living to the north of it, "below the Rock" as it is colloquially expressed, affect to be in some ways more civilised than those "above the Rock"; they claim to speak purer Malayalam, to be "better organised", to be "closer to Nayars". These claims are probably related to the degree of penetration made by Malabar culture after the conquest. The Rajas of Kottayam succeeded

1) Malabar District has also been partitioned, and Manantoddy Taluk is now in Cannanore District, Vaytiri Taluk in Calicut District.

in assimilating their north Wynad territories to a greater degree than did Kurumbranad in the south. Kottayam even pursued an aggressive policy against the Kanarese tracts adjacent to Wynad, claiming southern Coorg and Mysore up to Nanjangud, whereas Kurumbranad was unable even to hold southern Wynad intact. In south-east Wynad, round Gudalur, the population is largely Kannada- or Tamil-speaking, and a Mysorean chief there maintained his independence of Kurumbranad until the British conquest. Today, most of the long-established Nayar landowning families are found in North Wynad, with but few "above the Rock." The political "centre of gravity" of the Kuruma caste also lies in North Wynad; the principal caste Headmen all live either within North Wynad or else just across the border from it, and the most important of these, at the head of a rough hierarchy of caste Headmen, claims to owe his office to an appointment made long ago by the Kottayam Rajas in the days of their power. A caste dispute originating in South Wynad may therefore be referred upward in the hierarchy and so be settled ultimately in North Wynad.

The tradition of conquest by the Rajas occupies a central place in the local dogma of caste-formation. Though the two Rajas appear in the conquest-legend as equals, sharing out the country on an equal basis (1), the Kottayam Raja is regarded as the dominant figure, the law-giver and office-creator, in South Wynad equally with North Wynad. This may be due in part to the survival down to the present day of many of the Nayar families from whom his retainers and chieftains were drawn in North Wynad,

1) The equal sharing seems historically authentic. The ruling families of the two kingdoms were closely associated, and were branches of the same matrilineage, Kurumbranad claiming to be the senior branch.

whereas few such families owing allegiance to Kurumbranad have survived in South Wynad. Another factor is that at some uncertain date before 1800 A.D. Kottayam assumed political control of South as well as of North Wynad, though allowing the Kurumbranad Rajas to retain part or all of their family estates there. A non-specific "Kottayam Raja" is therefore the dominant figure in Wynad tradition.

After the massacre of Vēdans the Raja is said to have renamed the indigenous communities with the names they bear today, to have allotted them differential caste status, with appropriate customs, ritual, dress, language, occupation and territory, and to have appointed the Headmen of each community. The Vedans became Kurumas and the Aripans Urālis. Other castes in the present Wynad caste system have different traditions of immigration or subjection, but in each case their acceptance into the system is traced to the Raja. The Chetties claim to have immigrated from Tamilnad after the conquest, and to have been accepted by the Raja on condition of declaring their allegiance to him and adopting the Malayalam language and appropriate caste practises. The Kuricchiyas claim to be the descendants of Nayar soldiery from Travancore (1), brought here by the Raja but losing their caste status as a result of intermarrying with local women. The serf-caste of Paniyas were savage autochthones, hunted down in the jungles of an unidentified "Ippi mala" with nets and dogs, and enslaved by the Raja as his paddy cultivators. Thus the caste structure of Wynad finds its origin and justification in this legend of conquest. At the apex

1) A feudal kingdom of Kottayam also existed in Travancore, but I have not been able to establish any connection between the two. However, there was certainly a friendly political connection between some Travancore states and those of North Malabar.

of the structure is the Kottayam Raja himself. Even today, a state pensioner deprived of political power, the present head of the family remains the highest court of appeal on matters of caste dispute in Wynad, and is in fact still occasionally appealed to.

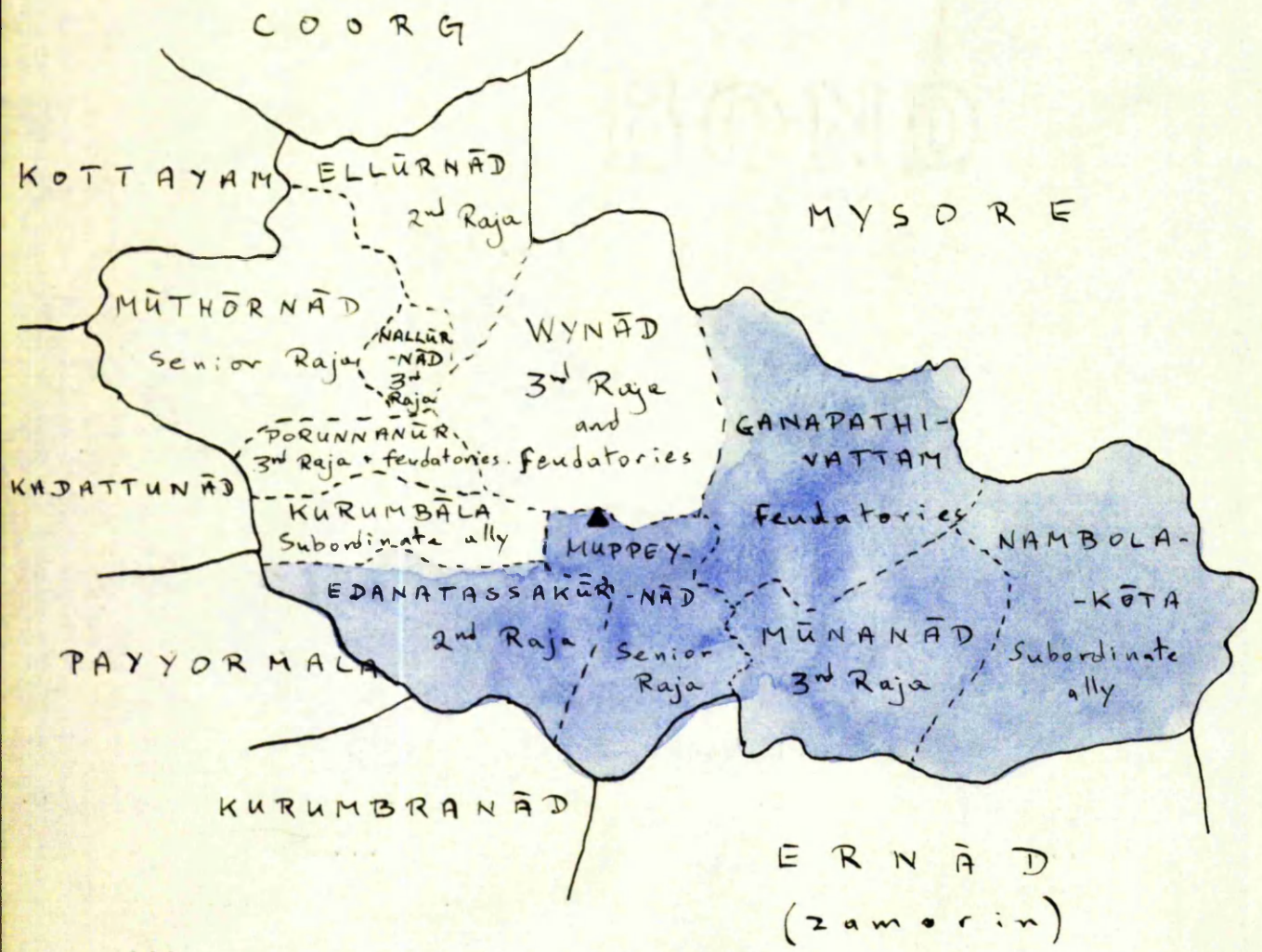
For example, the caste of Wynadan Chetties claim to have been accorded Nayar status by the Raja. In 1948-9 a group of these Chetties made pilgrimage to the temple of Guruvayur in South Malabar, where they asserted this claim by standing in the place reserved for Nayars. Their claim was denied by local Nayars and by the Temple authorities, on which they formally appealed to the Kottayam Raja, who endorsed their claim to be "Wynad Nayars." Legally the Madras Temple Entry Act of 1938 and the All-India Temple Entry Act of 1947 entitled them, as Hindu citizens of India to enter the temple, but they preferred to pursue their claim through the traditional system, whereby a Raja has the right to make decisions on caste matters.

The legendary creation of Kerala by the divine warrior Parasurama as recounted in the Keralolpatti refers only to the coastal tract, and ignores Wynad. This tract was reclaimed from the sea by the god, and given by him to the Nambudiri Brahmins, under whom the Nayar castes are supposed to administer the economic, judicial, and political organisation of the area. This legend is familiar in Wynad, but as a justification or explanation of the present caste structure and for the political organisation of pre-British times it is subsidiary to the legend of conquest by Kottayam. This is the more natural as there are few Brahmins in Wynad----under 1% of the population as compared with 2% for

all Malabar----and most of these are not Nambudiriss but the lower-ranking Patar or Embrandiri Brahmins, who are also immigrants by tradition; the former from Tamilnad and the latter from South Kanara. Within Wynad the Brahmins are localised round Manantoddy and Kalpptta, and few if any are major landholders, in contrast with South Malabar where Nambudiri families have long held great estates.

Under the Rajas Wynad was partitioned into a number of fiefs. These, and their holders, are shown in the sketch-map on the following page. Princes of the Kottayam royal lineage succeeded each other according to their genealogical seniority. The four most senior males in the matrilineage all bore the title of Raja, but are distinguished as 'Senior Raja', "2nd Raja', and so on. The title 'Kottayam Raja' by itself normally refers to the Senior Raja. The Senior Raja held the Periya area which, though mountainous, controlled the vital route to Kottayam, and also produced a rich cash-crop of cardomoms. The Tirunelli area was allotted to the Second Raja and to two vassals. The Third Raja held three chiefdoms of which one, comprising much fertile paddyland divided among a dozen vassals, was known as Wynad and probably gave its name to the entire region we know as Wynad. Kurumbala, furthest from the Kottayam border, was held by the Payyormala Nayars. These chieftains held a small adjacent principality in coastal Malabar; they were subordinate allies of Kottayam, the alliance being cemented by the marriage of a Payyormala Princess to a son of the Kottayam Raja. South Wynad was similarly organised by the Kurumbranad Rajas, the remote chiefdom of Nambolakota being a subordinate ally, at one time ruled by a son of the Kurumbranad Raja; but this tract, as we have said,

Map of Feudal Wynad



This map, on a scale of ten miles to the inch, shows the two kingdoms and the eleven chiefdoms of Wynad under the Rajas. The kingdom of South Wynad, coloured blue, was at some period taken over by a Kottayam Raja, perhaps by the Pyche Raja himself in 1799, perhaps earlier. Pādiri rock, a traditional boundary mark between the two kingdoms, is indicated by a black triangle.

was never effectively colonised or brought under Malabar control.

The principles of territorial organistion in Wynad in pre-British times were basically similar to these obtaining in coastal Malabar as described by E. J. Miller. The two fundamental units of local organisation were the chieftaincy (nād) and the intercaste village (dēsam). The former term however was used ambiguously; nād could refer equally to a kingdom such as Kottayam, also called Purainād, or to the fiefs or groups of dēsams within it, and which Miller compares to the dukedoms of feudal Western Europe. The distinction has been made here by using the terms kingdom and chiefdom.

As an instance, the extreme northern part of Wynad consisted of four dēsams two of which were held by the Second Raja of Kottayam and one each by Edachena Nayar and Vemom Nambiyar. As a unit the four desams formed the chiefdom of Ellūrnād or Ellangūrnād; literally the 'chiefdom of the junior branch'---of the Kottayam royal lineage understood. Similarly the chiefdom of the senior branch, consisting of 13 desams, was called Mūthōrnād, the prefix mūthe meaning elder. North Wynad, while in some respects a colonial appendage of Kottayam, remained a separate kingdom, as did Scotland and England after the accession of James I. Successive rulers of the two kingdoms were crowned separately in each at least as late as 1759 (1).

The dēsam or intercaste village, which I have referred to simply as 'village' save where the chance of ambiguity demands greater explicitness, is of the dispersed type familiar from the literature on Malabar. An important difference however between the villages of

1) Logan, I 395.

Wynad and those of the coastal plain was their relative size. This difference appears always to have existed. In 1941 the average area of a village in coastal Malabar was 2 square miles or a little less, whereas in Wynad it was over 14 square miles. The constant which explains this difference is the size of population. In 1941 the average Wynad village (amsam) contained 1,600 inhabitants; Kurumbranad Taluk 1,400; Kottayam Taluk 1,200; Calicut Taluk 2,000; Chirakkal Taluk 1,800. The difference in area was due to the scantier population of Wynad.

Even today many Wynad villages consist of a fairly small inhabited tract and a much larger stretch of waste and forest. Size was dictated by the capacity to yield a certain mimumumf of revenue or saleable produce, and to contribute a mimimum number of armed men to the forces of the local chief. To make up the muster roll a minimum population of military Nayars or other arms-bearing castes was necessary; and since Nayars in Wynad composed a smaller proportion of the population-----perhaps 10% of all Hindus as against 20% on the coast----larger villages were essential.

The principal land-holders in each village were normally of military Nayar caste, embracing sometimes a single joint family or taravād, sometimes more than one. A senior male of the family chosen for ability as well as for seniority was the judicial and military head of the village (dēsavari). Where more than one such family of equal power or status existed in a village, an arrangement of joint or alternating headmanship was made. In 1817, in the 62 villages of Wynad, 41 had a single headman, 11 had joint heads,

2 had a common headman, 4 had a Raja as headman, and 4 more had agents appointed by a Raja.

The tenure of land by these Nayar joint families was normally on a species of freehold peculiar to Kerala called janmam, which might be translated as 'birthright.' It implied the right to services from the subordinate castes of the village, beside a share of the produce. It was held in most cases from the royal family, and involved military service in return; that is, the village headman had to provide a specified number of soldiers of the military castes for the army of his chieftain at need.

As the dominant caste, politically and militarily, the Nayars did not cultivate the land themelves, but either leased it on long or short-term tenancies, or had it cultivated for their direct benefit by agrestic serfs (1). Similarly most of the long-term tenants, who might themselves be Nayars, in turn sublet their land or employed serfs to cultivate it for them. Logan estimates that in 1857 over a third of the population of Wynad, 16,500 out of 41,200, were slaves. In general one can say that caste status in a village was a function of the respective status of each community to the soil; the higher-ranking castes owned the land, middle-ranking castes tenanted it, and the lower castes tilled it as labourers or as serfs.

1) Gough says that "the castes of agricultural serfs are absent in Kottayam."---"Cults of the Dead among the Nayars," Journal of American Folklore: 71, 281, 1958, note 22. This is certainly not true of Wynad, including that part of it formerly held by Kottayam, although the 1828 Report on Slavery comments that "all the fieldwork is done by slaves called Paniers, who are held in higher esteem than the slaves of the lower districts (of Malabar). They are admitted to the threshold of their master's houses, and are even employed in grinding rice for the use of the temples."

The first major alteration known to have occurred to this system of organisation was the imposition of land revenue payable in cash. This was effected by the Mysorean ruler Hyder Ali, who invaded Malabar in 1765 and again in 1773, with the intention of annexing it. Munro gives a brief but masterly account of the changes he enforced (1):

> "Haidar...amalgamated small contiguous desams to make larger villages that would yield an estimated revenue of about 200 pagodas (2). The whole, called a tara, then took the name of the principal desam. Forty to eighty taras under a Parbutti and a Menon or Curnam made up one Nād or District, under a Tahsildar and two Seristadars. In each desam or village it was ascertained who were the leading men exclusive of the former Desavaris, and one of these was appointed head of the village, and called Mukhyastan; it was not deemed safe by Haidar to employ former Desavaris. A large village might have two or three Mukhyastans."

The Headmen of these new villages controlled the local police, estimated the produce of land and trees, and helped the Parbuttxi to collect the revenue, though this did not pass directly through his hands. The office carried no pay or rent remission, as the cynical Hyder declared that the chances of illicit profit which it offered were an adequate recompense. As revenue yield was the prime factor in determining the size of a tara, those in Wynad were very large, and numbered only eleven, of which two were in what is now Nilgiri Wynad. Their boundaries followed those of the old desams, and in fact each tara corresponded closely or exactly in boundary with the feudal chiefdoms that they replaced. That Wynad in the late 18th century was relatively

1) Munro, Sir Thomas. Report on the...Judicial System...of Malabar. 1817.
2) A pagoda was worth Rs 3 or Rs 3---8. The rupee was then worth two shillings sterling.

poor appears from the fact that annual revenue it yielded was only 9,000 silver pagodas----roughly one quarter of the yield from most of the nāds of coastal Malabar.

Mysorean control of Malabar proved insecure and brief. The British, from their coastal trading posts, encouraged the Malabar Rajas to rebel, and after 1791 actively assisted them. The Mysoreans were expelled and, by the Treaty of 1792, Malabar came effectively under British control. By some strange oversight Wynad was not mentioned in this treaty although the Kottayam Rajas, fighting as allies of the East India Company, had expelled the Mysoreans from all but the frontier posts. Sporadic fighting between Mysore and Kottayam continued until the final Mysore war of 1799, which terminated Hyder's dynasty.

In the latter part of this warfare a leading role in Wynad had been played by Kerala Varma, a junior prince of the Kottayam royal lineage known to English historians as the "Pyche Raja" from his palace at Parassi. During the crisis of the Mysorean wars his elder brothers, along with many other timorous landholders, had fled the area and taken refuge in Travancore. The Pyche Raja claimed that by their conduct they had forfeited their claim to rule, and that he should now become the paramount ruler in Wynad; including apparently south Wynad as well as north.

The peace of 1799, as if to make amends for that of 1792, ceded Wynad to the East India Company under one name, and to Mysore under another (1). A proclamation of 1803 confirmed the cession to Malabar, but neither the Company nor the Pyche Raja had waited for this formality. The Raja resisted attempts by the Company's agents to enter Wynad in

1) Logan W., III 321n.

1799, and open rebellion (discountenanced by the senior Raja of Kottayam) began in the same year. Taking advantage of the wild terrain, and assisted by the Nayar landholders and a proportion of the lower caste inhabitants, the Pyche Raja was able to continue guerilla warfare in Wynad until his death in a surprise encounter in December 1805. Wynad then came fully under British control, but a decade after coastal Malabar, and as a result of military conquest instead of by treaty. The lands of the Pyche Raja and of those who had assisted him were declared to be escheated.

Under British administration the Mysorean revenue system was reimposed, the fiscal divisions corresponding to those of Hyder, but now termed at first hobali and then amsam. No survey was undertaken until 1883, but various settlements were imposed, the first being in 1806. It was made on the basis of information supplied by village officials, and applied only to Wynad, which remained a Revenue Division separate from coastal Malabar until well into the 20th century. Paddyland alone was taxed, on the basis of seed sown, the estimate of both seed and harvest being made by the local officials, who were themselves landowners or landholders.

After a small allowance for the expenses of cultivation, the cultivator had to pay one third of the remainder of his crop to his landlord and one third to the State, the latter portion being in cash. This settlement proved impossible to enforce, and was repeatedly modified. Village officers consistently underestimated the quantities of seed sown and of grain harvested---by as much as three quarters according to Innes. The need to pay in cash was also a great handicap

to the peasant, who had hitherto been largely excluded from the cash economy (1).

The settlement was impossible to enforce because of many conditions peculiar to Wynad. There land was abundant and cultivators few. The fighting of 1791-1805 had impoverished the land and driven many inhabitants to settle elsewhere. Methods of cultivation were , by coastal standards, inefficiant; the yield of paddy being often fivefold rather than the tenfold or more expected in the coastal Taluks. Seed was more thinly sown than in coastal Malabar, giving a greater taxable area of cultivated land for equivalent yields when acreage eventually became the unit of assessment. Second crops were unknown, and the land was liable to the depredations of wild beasts and birds, since Wynad was disarmed during the fighting, and firearms for crop protection were not permitted until 1820. Landholders were accustomed to leave a greater proportion of the their paddyland fallow than in coastal Malabar, and after 1860 tax had to be paid on this unproductive land. Transport was difficult and costly, and the sale-price of paddy consequently lower to the cultivator, who now had to sell a proportion of it to meet the demands of the revenue officials.

For many cultivators and landlords, cheating the Revenue Department was almost a condition of survival. Those unable to realise

1) In feudal Malabar money circulated among the upper castes only----the Princely castes and the Brahmin and Nayar landholders and soldiers---and the trading communities, Muslim, Hindu, and European. The Rajas needed money to pay and equip their armies, which they derived from fines, monopolies, and taxes on trade. Nayar landholders on long-term tenancies needed money to pay the landowner his renewal fee. They derived it partly from the production of cash crops, and partly from sending their sister's sons into the army and claiming part of their pay. In Malabar, as in feudal Europe, many Rajas maintained standing armies, which were paid in cash.

the annual revenue sum had their lands confiscated, or were made to do forced labour. Discontent led to a brief outbreak of rebellion in 1812, and to a considerable decline in the area of cultivated land, apart from that occasioned by the fighting of 1791-1805. In his survey of 1826-7 Ward remarks that less than 10% of the total area is paddyfield, whereas a further 20% is "waste marsh" which was formerly paddyland also (1). The State monopoly of cardomoms, which the Company took over from the Kottayam Rajas, was for some time a greater source of income than land revenue itself. In 1830 the latter yielded only Rs 34,000 while the cardomom monopoly brought in Rs 42,000.

Of the inhabitants the local Sub-Collector wrote in 1805:

> "In the southern hobalis of parakameetil (I.e. in South Wynad)...the Chetties and Gaundans are wealthy and numerous. They are a vile and servile race...strangers to every honest sentiment...and closely connected with the Pyche Raja. The Koormars (sic, for Mullu Kurumas), a tribe of bowmen, have deserted their own countries and are dragging on a miserable existence under a dreadful impression that it is the intention of the Government to extirpate them." (2).

Many Chetties seem to have moved their families to the relative safety of Mysore, while the Mullu Kurumas of the central part of Wynad fled to the jungles of the periphery to escape the consequences of the fighting. These became terrible after 1802, when the Collector noted: "As the whole of the principal inhabitants of Wynad are in rebellion, the only means of suppressing it is to deprive them of their crops." Consequently bodies of troops and police moved to and fro about the country, destroying crops

1) B. S. Ward's Survey Memoir of Malabar.
2) Logan, I 549.

and burning houses. Such action might well make the Chetties and Gaundans appear to Mr. Baber "strangers to every honest sentiment," since their sympathy and allegiance alike lay with the hunted Raja. The Mullu Kurumas were probably concerned chiefly to avoid the fighting, though small numbers of them are known to have joined the Raja as auxiliaries, while about 200 of them were recruited by the Company as armed police for the duration of the rebellion.

The landowners of Wynad are described in the 1828 Report on Slavery as "torpid to a degree" (1). In what this "torpidity" consisted is doubtful; it may be a reference to the primitive methods of cultivation practised, or it may describe the reaction after a generation of almost continuous warfare. It could also refer to the tendency of the Nayar chieftains and landowners, especially in South Wynad (2), to be absentees. They kept up establishments in Wynad, but control of these was often delegated to a manager, perhaps a junior member of the taravād, or an affinal relative. Local political power was increasingly transferred to these junior members or to local Chetty and Gaundan landowners. As we have mentioned, the Wynādan Chetties now claim Nayar status, and the origin of the claim lies in this situation.

A major change in the economy of Wynad began after 1840 with the introduction of estate crops by the Europeans. At first there were many difficulties to hinder development; the climate, lack of roads

1) Papers on Slavery in India, 1828. This quotation, and that given in an earlier note, are taken from p. 924.

2) This tendency probably began with the Pyche rebellion. Ward describes the "eastern part" of Wynad in 1826-7 as "almost entirely deserted."

and labour, and the reluctance of most landowners to grant concessions to Europeans, even on land which was not yielding them any profit. To the Malayali, ownership of land carries a high prestige, and though the landowners were willing to lease out land, they were not willing to sell. The European investor on the other hand wanted outright freehold possession.

The initial investment was in coffee, and by 1857 there were 36 Estates covering a total of 24,000 acres, though only part of this was actually planted. The land was cheap, and cost only about Rs 4 per acre, but continued difficult to obtain, which the then Collector blamed on the "clubbing of the land in the hands of a few reactionary native landlords" (1). There was a coffee boom in the 70s, but leaf-dissase appeared, and had almost wiped out the Estates by 1890. With resistant strains coffee-growing has since recovered, but is now a garden crop as much as an estate crop. The inhabitants of Wynad quickly saw the advantages of coffee as a source of cash, and most of those with gardens, including the Kurumas, began to plant it, if only a few bushes. About 17,000 acres are now under coffee; and in 1955 it was stated that there were over 7,000 growers, of whom 84% held less than 5 acres of coffee.

European investors abandoned coffee as a crop after 1890, and turned to rubber and tea. In 1955 Malabar Wynad contained 15,000 acres of tea, almost all European-owned and managed, and employing a total of 20,000 labourers, mostly new or first-generation immigrants. Tea, because of the elaborate culture and processing required, has remained

1) Robinson W. Report on....Wynad. 1857.

a highly specialised estate crop. To a lesser extent this is true of rubber; but all the other cash crops, notably coffee, pepper, and ginger, are very widely grown by smallholders.

This important diversification of the Wynad economy encouraged the Administration to undertake (in 1883-5) a full-scale revenue survey, and in 1886 a new Settlement, peculiar to Wynad, came into effect. Cultivated land was divided into two basic categories, wet (paddyland) and dry (gardens, Estates, and millet crops). Soils were graded by quality, and an assessment laid down for each grade. That on wet land varied from As 8 to Rs 2---8 per acre, and slightly less for dry land. The immediate result of the survey and of the exchange of seed for acreage as the basis of assessment was to send up the revenue yield by 150% and to increase the area defined as "occupied land" by nearly 300%. Minor alterations have since been made to the system, and the revenue charges have risen somewhat, but the principles of the 1886 Settlement have remained until the present day.

Parallel with this economic development administrative changes have been brought about, in which the large Revenue villages known first as hobalis amd later as amsams, have been steadily divided up into smaller units. The modern amsams coincide almost exactly with the original dēsams or intercaste villages of feudal times. Until 1877 there were only 13 Revenue villages in Wynad; today there are 70, which compares with the 72 dēsams of feudal Wynad. Their names, and to a great extent their areas and boundaries, are identical with those of the old dēsams; and in a few of them the land and the office of village Headmanship are still held by families which

enjoyed them under the Rajas; for example, in the villages of Pudhādi and Purakādi. However, 12 of the 70 are now in South-East Wynad, which was separated from Malabar in 1877 to form part of Nilgiri District. This tract, as was said earlier, was never successfully assimilated by the feudal kingdoms.

Dēsam boundaries are not the only internal boundaries that have persisted from feudal times. The division of Wynad into two kingdoms has recently re-emerged in a new form with the creation of two Taluks in Malabar Wynad in 1957, the boundary between them corresponding with that between the North and South Wynad of the Rajas. Some parts of Wynad have lately been organised into statutory Panchayat villages, and the boundaries of these units correspond with those of the old feudal chiefdoms within Wynad. Each such village embraces a number of adjacent Revenue villages, and its internal affairs are in part controlled by a board elected by adult franchise within the village. The territory of the old chiefdom of Ganapathivattam now corresponds with Kidanganad Panchayat village, and embraces the dēsams, or Revenue villages of Nenmēni, Nulpura, Kidanganad, Cheynad, and Vadakanad (1). It includes the fieldwork area of Nellivayal ridge, or neighbourhood.

The persistence of feudal territorial divisions, in terms of their boundaries if not of their social organisation, contributes in turn to the persistence of the indigenous caste organisation, and of the territorial organisation within each caste. Their elders are familiar with these divisions, which figure in their historical perspective back to the Nayar conquest. This gives a depth to their

1) Some statistics for two Panchayat villages in Wynad, including that of Kidanganad, are given below, at p. 88.

sense of "belonging" not shared by immigrants. To the latter, Purakādi (for example) is merely a fiscal division, or a postal address. They do not associate themselves with its past. This is also true of the lowest castes in the indigenous system, such as the Paniyas, who are excluded from competition for rank within it. Those indigenous castes who do compete within it, Kurumas, Padhiyas, Chetties and others, do concern themselves with these matters; for they have direct relevance to their caste organisation.

The Kuruma caste village, or Locality, tends to be coterminous with the feudal dēsam. Modern disparities exist, and may be due to local shifts of allegiance within the caste; but in other cases they spring from recent minor boundary adjustments. Thus at Nellivayal the village boundary between Nenmēni and Nulpura now transects that neighbourhood, so that part of the Kuruma Locality there is in Nenmēni although most of it still lies in Nulpura. Originally all of it lay in Nulpura, but about a century ago the boundary was shifted slightly; a new road had been driven along the crest of Nellivayal ridge, and this seemed to the Administration to offer a clearer boundary than the existing line at the foot of the ridge, along the stream. Kuruma Locality affiliation ignores the change.

The division into two kingdoms (now Taluks), has bearing on the dispute between Appād and Kōtūr, the two supreme Kuruma caste Headmen, recounted below (1). This dispute re-opens a major caste cleavage of feudal times, and contradicts the general tendency towards caste unity by a strengthening of horizontal ties within the caste at the expense

1) See below, p. 280 f.

of vertical intercaste ties within each village. This development is discussed in chapter V.

The breakdown of the village as a unit of local co-operation has already been foreshadowed. It persists as a unit of revenue collection, and of limited co-operation or competition between some indigenous castes. Its Headman, the Adhigāri, occupies a potentially important intercalary position linking villagers to the wider Administration, controlling intercaste relations, and those between immigrant and indigenous villagers. In fact his position is little better than that of a clerk. His duties are to register births, deaths, and certain legal petitions, and to collect land revenue. His former power to hear and decide on minor disputes is now being channelled away to the Panchayat Board, which functions as a village court. Villagers now take their disputes to this or higher courts, or to caste Headmen, or to local magnates for arbitration, according to their nature.

Village Headmen may be magnates, but more often they are junior members of fairly substantial local families. In both Kidanganad and Nenmēni villages, the Headmen are young kinsmen of substantial Chetty landowmers. In Nulpura the post is held by the young son of a Tiyyar immigrant, now established on a moderate landed property. A dispute on which local arbitration is sought is at least as likely to be referred to the head of such a family as to his Adhigari son or sister's son. Few villages in Wynad are dominated by a single family, and recent records show that the post of village Headman tends to change hands frequently, moving between families and between communities; and going

to immigrants or first-generation settlers as often as to indigenes. It still carries prestige, if little power.

Disputing villagers may seek arbitration from any of these local magnates, with caste or communal affiliation usually directing the choice. Thus a Kuruma disputing some minor claim with a Muslim at Nellivayal would probably ask Nochamvayal Veliyan, a local Kuruma peasant of substantial means, and a member of the District Board, to pronounce on his claim; while the Muslim (if a Sunni) might invoke the arbitration of Kādha Hajji, the principal Muslim landowner resident in that neighbourhood. Veliyan and Kādha Hajji would meet and, in presence of the disputants, arbitrate on their claims. Such arbitrators function within a neighbourhhod rather than within a village. If they fail to resolve the dispute, it tends to remain unsettled or to be taken to law. Of such arbitrators it can be said that they not only have the technical skills of arbitration, but occupy positions in wider political and economic structures than do the disputants, which enables them to transcend local antagonisms and cleavages. Veliyan is a member of the District Board, and of several intercommunal organisations at regional (Panchayat village) level. Kādha Hajji is a minor landowner, with important connections with Muslim merchants in the main local bazaar, and also in coastal Malabar.

Both men are landowners, but neither can be described as a landowner (janmi) in the traditional structure. A janmi is he who owns the village temple, and controls the caste offices in the village. An Adhigari does not do this. Each village contained the families of

one or more janmis, who were the principal landholders there, and automatically supplied the village Headman (dēsavari). A few Chetties are recognised as being janmis, but for the most part they are Nayars. Their estates have generally been partitioned or dispersed, but the office remains important at the apex of the traditional village caste structure. Immigrants settling in the village ignore his authority and tend also to ignore the village temples and caste offices. But competition still persists within and between the indigenous castes for these offices, and only the janmi can regulate this competition. The need for the survival of such an office is built in to the local caste structure in its political and ceremonial aspects.

The immigrants are exterior to this structure. Not only do they not compete in it, but it tends to act as an exclusive mechanism, enabling the indigenous castes to assert their own distinctness from and superiority over, the immigrants. The Hindu immigrants bring with them their caste, but no caste organisation. The formal associations which they join ignore village boundaries, and tend to be communal rather than caste, or to ignore even community, as in the Colony Ex-Servicemen's Association, or various political parties. Their greater sophistication and the weakness of caste or communal antagonisms among them have enabled them to dominate the new Panchayat village Boards. On that at Kidanganad, only 4 of the 16 members are indigenes, all of them Chetties. Of the remainder, 5 were Christians, 4 Hindus, and 3 Muslims; all immigrants or the sons of immigrants. The indigenes vote in elections to the Board, but tend not to compete for seats, though they still outnumber immigrants.

II iii. Modern Wynad as a Plural Society.

During and after the late war conditions in Wynad enjoyed a "boom", the evidence for which is seen most dramatically in the doubling of the population between 1940 and the present day, a great part of the increase being by immigration from the coastal plain of Kerala. In 1941 the population of Wynad was just over 100,000 (1), but by 1951 it had risen to nearly 170,000. Land was the magnet that attracted these immigrants. With an area of 821 square miles, the 1941 population was dispersed over that territory with an average of 130 persons to the square mile as compared with 671 for the whole of Malabar. It was estimated that there was only 0.3 persons to each cultivable acre as against 1.4 in the entire District. Landless cultivators therefore began to migrate here from as far away as Travancore.

Among the factors which set this change in motion are the policies of the State and Central Governments as expressed in various development schemes. Malabar has for long been a deficit area in foodgrains, and the Government planned to make Wynad, with its abundant uncultivated acres, the "granary of Malabar". This was to be done by the settlement there of landless Malayali cultivators, thus both relieving the pressure of population in the coastal Taluks and increasing the output of paddy. Surveys with this object in view were undertaken before the war. The war itself brought in its train DDT and other modes of combating malaria and other diseases common in Wynad, and

1) Exact figures are included in a note at the end of this section. All figures are for Malabar Wynad only.

gave rise to the suggestion that a farming community of former soldiers of the Indian army should be settled here. These two factors, DDT and "the Colony" had a profound effect in encouraging and controlling immigration, though they did not of themselves initiate it.

The Wynad Ex-Servicemen's Colonisation Scheme (1) was initiated by a Government Order in 1945, under which 30,000 acres of mixed lands in South Wynad were acquired by compulsory purchase. This land was reallocated in the proportion of (roughly) 60% to Ex-servicemen, 25% to existing owners and cultivators in the Colony area, and 15% to other immigrants from Kerala. Each elementary family is allotted 2 acres of wet land and 5 of dry, or alternatively 10 acres of dry land only. This land is to become the freehold property of the Colonist, subject to conditions prohibiting sale or sub-letting, on payment to the Colony Authority of the stipulated janmam fee equivalent to that paid in compensation when the land was first acquired by the Colony. In 1953 there were about 700 families of "Local Colonists" and 2,100 Ex-servicemen, of whom about 300 had so far "deserted" after taking advantage of the initial cash loans.

A sharp distinction can be drawn between "Local Colonists", who include Kurumas, and the others. Local Colonists, being established cultivators, are not given any of the loans towards development which the Colony makes to the Ex-servicemen, nor are they entitled to buy high-quality seed or implements at special rates from the Colony Farm. A more serious complaint is that they are not given equal shares of

1) A brief account of the Colony as it appeared in 1948 is given at p. 186 of Aiyappan's "Socio-Economic Survey...".

land with the others. Though each family may so far have been able to acquire the stipulated 2 acres of wet land, few have been given dry land and none (to my knowledge) the full allowance of 5 acres of dry land. It is true that most Kuruma Colonists were already in possession of some dry land, partly developed in the form of gardens, but very few indeed hold as much as 5 acres. They therefore feel, and with some justice, that they are being treated as second-class citizens. The Colony for its part argues that dry land would be allotted them if only they would disperse to less populous areas, where additional land is available.

There is also the consideration that "results" must be obtained. Many Kurumas have been slow to repay the janmam-sum to the Colony; indeed they argue---"We have always been tenants of such-and-such a landlord, paying him a small annual rent; now let the Colony be our landlord and we will pay them rent, but we cannot afford to pay a lump sum." Repeated demand and refusal to pay have caused irritation on both sides, and some Kuruma Local Colonists have recently been dispossessed. Also many Kurumas are comparatively inefficient cultivators. On this subject I have heard one Ex-service Colonist give expression to a common feeling in the words: "It is quite right to take the land away from these fellows; why we grow more on one acre than they can grow on two!"

The compulsory acquisition of land has also brought the Colony into public odium. At the prevailing market rates in Wynad, paddyland costs between Rs 300 and 500 an acre. The Colony however set the purchase price at between Rs 86---4 per acre for the best wet land

and Rs 57---8 for the worst. Though this has benefitted the tenant-cultivator it has caused many small landowners a loss, including a number of Kurumas. The largest landowners however have not yet suffered. From the first it was Government policy not to acquire existing estates, i.e. estates of tea or coffee that could not be fragmented. This exception has apparently been extended to big landowners of mixed land as the result of a Court decision. One of the dispossessed landowners was the Nilambur Raja, who complained that his land was undervalued. He won his case in Court and was awarded about double the sum normally paid by the Colony (1). Since then the big landholders have been left alone.

State-aided Colonists represent only a fraction of the vast numbers of landless migrants who have settled in Wynad since 1940, when the influx first assumed great proportions. The 1951 Census shows that, of all the inhabitants of Wynad, 24,000 were born in Travancore-Cochin. The total number of immigrants is not known, but must be approaching 50,000, or nearly a third of the total population. An additional factor encouraging immigration besides the publicity given by the Colonisation scheme is that the local administration has proved unable to cope with unauthorised occupation of Government waste land, or even with forest, both public and private. In 1955 I was told that 5,000 such cases were known to the authorities, but unofficial estimates of the same period put the figure at 8,000.

When the Communist government came to power in 1956 it declared

1) My information on this point came from a local organiser of the Socialist party. I believe it to be authentic but have been unable to check it.

that no action would be taken against "squatters" already in possession of land, but that no additional "squatting" would be tolerated after April 5th 1957. However, subsequent Press reports suggest that the Administration continues to be powerless to stop it, and "squatting" continues. On waste land it does no direct harm to the public interest but some of the land involved is valuable forest. It also affects the economy of the Kurumas and other indigenes, since the waste land that they used as pasture is being occupied and enclosed, and the wild beasts that they hunted are being decimated and driven away. To protect its timber the Forest authorities enforce the Forest laws more stringently, and this has made it much harder for the Kurumas to obtain firewood, timber, and other Forest produce which formerly they collected almost at will.

The most recent measure adopted by the Communist Government---and probably the real reason for their downfall---was the Agrarian Relations Bill of 1959 which set an upper limit of 15 acres on holdings of wet land. Its object of assisting the creation of many small peasant holdings had already been in great measure acheived in the Colony area of Wynad, as the following table from the 1951 Census indicates:

	Kidanganad Panchayat Village	Vaytiri Panchayat Village
Area in square miles:	160 (half being Forest)	98
Total population:	c. 24,000	c. 24,000
Landowners & dependants	2	13
Cultivating owners	9,800	1,400
Cultivating tenants	1,600	5,700
Labourers	8,700	7,300
Others	c. 4,000	c. 10,000

The figures given include dependants. It is clear that a number of

landowners who do not in fact cultivate their land must have registered themselves as cultivating landowners, shopkeepers and the like, but about 10,000 cultivating landowners and dependents exist in Kidanganad as against only 1,400 in Vaytiri. Much of Kidanganad, which embraces five intercaste villages, is in the Colony area, which is not so with Vaytiri.

On balance the advent of the Colony has materially benefitted the Kurumas who live upon the land it administers. The total amount of land within its limits cultivated by them has probably altered little but many of them, instead of being tenants, are now the owners or prospective owners of the lands they till. A few rich Kurumas have suffered. Nochamvayal Veliyan, as an extreme example, inherited 40 acres of land at Nellivayal from his stepfather, all but two of which were acquired by the Colony in 1947 for the sum of Rs 3,250, while another man of the same hamlet lost about 20 acres to the Colony. This hamlet however was exceptionally prosperous. On the other hand several formerly landless Kurumas have acquired Colony land, while others who were tenants of Veliyan now hold their land as owners or as prospective owners from the Colony. The cash compensation Veliyan has invested in dry land producing cash crops, in houses in the local bazaar, and in a teashop.

It has been estimated that the cost of development of uncultivated waste land by a Colonist works out at about Rs 375 an acre annually for four years. The initial arrangement was for the payment to each Ex-service Colonist of Rs 1,900 to enable him to bring his plot under cultivation, but this has proved insufficient. Additional loans and

free grants have had to be made, the latest being in the summer of 1959, over twelve years after the scheme began. Frequent visits by Ministers and high officials are made to the Colony---there were 3 or 4 such visits in each of the years 1953-5---and on each occasion the Colonists Association presents a memorandum of complaints and requests. The Colonists are well aware that, for cogent political reasons, the scheme cannot be allowed to fail. By the end of March 1953 about Rs 3,000,000 had been given as a free grant to the Ex-service Colonists, and a further half a million in loans. No doubt two very important reasons for the high cost of the scheme are the total ignorance of agriculture of most ex-Servicemen (1), and their reluctance to perform any manual labour. A majority of them employ outside labour, which is an expensive item.

This outside labour has been drawn in part from indigenous communities such as the Kurumas and Paniyas, in part from landless immigrants. But many immigrants have been able to establish themselves as smallholders, such as one Travancore Christian now at Nellivayal. He migrated to Wynad in 1941, and acquired land here while prices were still low. According to his own statement: "When I first came here Rs 100 would buy 4 acres of dry waste, and Rs 1,000 3 acres of wet land or more. In Travancore wet land was very costly, so I sold all I had and though it was little enough, the money enabled me to buy a good holding here for Rs 2,000. I wrote home advising others to follow me, and now there are many of us." While Kurumas and other indigenes

1) One Colonist friend of mine planted 300 coffee seedlings, unaware that shade was essential for their survival. They all died.

appear bewildered and resentful at the rising flood of immigration specific criticism is directed only at the Colony and at Colonists. Many Kurumas are themselves Local Colonists, but they in no way associate themselves with the organisation. For its part the Colony largely ignores them save when an effort is made to exact the purchase price of the land. New developments, such as the "Japanese method" (1) or the intraduction of cotton and sugar-cane, are encouraged among the Ex-servicemen; but Local colonists are given neither the means nor the advice to undertake them.

In his Survey Memoir of 1829 Ward remarks that "there are 85 castes in Wynad....principally Nayars, Paniyas, Kuricchiyas, Chetties and Mullu Kurumas." There were then no Christians, but a few Muslim traders resided here. An account of 1805 says:

"The Moplahs are but few in Wynad, their houses are larger and built in regular streets, and have always the word Angary (2) attached to the name of their village. They are the only persons who keep shops, as the Nayars consider themselves of too high a caste to trade by retail."

The stability of this long-established society has been shattered by post-war immigration and by more subtle penetration of the outside world. Several distinct societies now coexist in Wynad, and have yet to coalesce. On the one hand are the immigrants and on the other the indigenes, which groups are in turn cross-cut into the three major religious communities.

1) Intensive paddy cultivation has lately been publicised under this name. More recently deep ploughing has been introduced as the "Chinese method." Most informants were sceptical of their value.

2) Properly angādi, a bazaar, as in Mīnangādi, Fish-bazaar. The quotation is from Mackenzie Ms VI, cxxxiii, 13, "A Short Account of Wyenaad."

This cross-cutting is not completely symmetrical. Virtually the entire Christian community is made up of immigrants, and though Moplahs have long been established here, the indigenes tend to regard them as newcomers also. Where a Moplah has acquired much wealth or property, my Kuruma informants would emphasise that he, or his father, "came up the Ghat road twenty years ago as a peddlar selling fish, and has grown rich on our custom." As for the Hindu community, it is sharply dichotomised by the Kurumas into immigrants and indigenes----nātukāre, or local people. In making such a dichotomy, which involves obvious contradictions, the Kurumas are extending their own peculiarity as a highly localised society to others, such as the Nayars, who in fact are not so localised. In a previous section it was shown that several sub-castes and tribal communities such as the Kurumas are found only in Wynad, whereas Nayars, Brahmins and others are found everywhere in Kerala. Many of these families had economic and kinship ties extending beyond Wynad, and therefore were better able to adjust themselves to the problems created by immigration.

To a Nayar living in Wynad, and whose family has long been resident there, an immigrant Nayar may be a friend, a kinsman, a rival or a client, but his status is established (1)---they are both Nayars. To a Kuruma on the other hand a distinction may be drawn in

1) No instance was encountered of an immigrant attempting to pass himself off as being of higher caste than he really was. On one occasion a Kuruma woman was found taking a meal on her verandah with a Tiyyar immigrant. When he admitted that he was a Tiyyar h hostess hurriedly contradicted him---"No no! You are a Nayar!"--- and drew him out of the way. Tiyyars are regarded as having lowe status than Kurumas, who assert that they do not interdine.

ceremonial contexts in particular, between immigrant Nayars and nallu Nayars, the word nallu meaning good or pure. The "good" Nayars are primarily those associated with the traditional political organisation of Wynad, and their dependants. Often they are long-established landowning families, whose temples, and the caste offices established by them, are accepted by the autochthonous lower caste Hindus.

Immigrant Nayars often ignore these temples and the offices held from them, and just as they call in question these institutions, so their own status is often in doubt. Food may be accepted by a Kuruma from a "good" Nayar, but not necessarily from an immigrant Nayar. To some extent the social behaviour of immigrant Nayars and other Hindus justifies this Kuruma distinction. Many immigrant Hindus live at Nellivayal, but they hardly ever attend ceremonies at the village temple there. In the nearby bazaar of Sultan's Battery there are two major temples, one of Ganapathi and one of Mariamma, at opposite ends of the main street. The former shrine is owned and managed by local Chetties, whereas the latter, which was in a neglected state, has been taken over and refurbished by Hindu immigrants, especially Thiyyars. These have stopped blood-sacrifice there and Sanskritised the ceremonies. At major festivals a loudspeaker is installed, and a Brahmin gives talks on the Puranas. Chetties, Kurumas, and other indigenous communities attend the Ganapathi temple, but few go to the other. Conversely the immigrants attend the Mariamma temple.

Wynad at the present day appears therefore to fall within the scope of Furnivall's definition of a "plural society." This he defines as "A society....comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit." (2). Within the total society four groups coexist: Christians, Moplahs, Hindu immigrants, and autochthonous Hindus. In the latter category must be included the Chetties, Kurumas, and other castes or tribal communities peculiar to Wynad. Not all these communities are tribal, and no sharp distinction can be made between immigrant and autochtonous Hindus, the Nayars for example being members of both categories. No such distinction can be made among the Moplahs since, as a trading community, their connections with the coast have always been important.

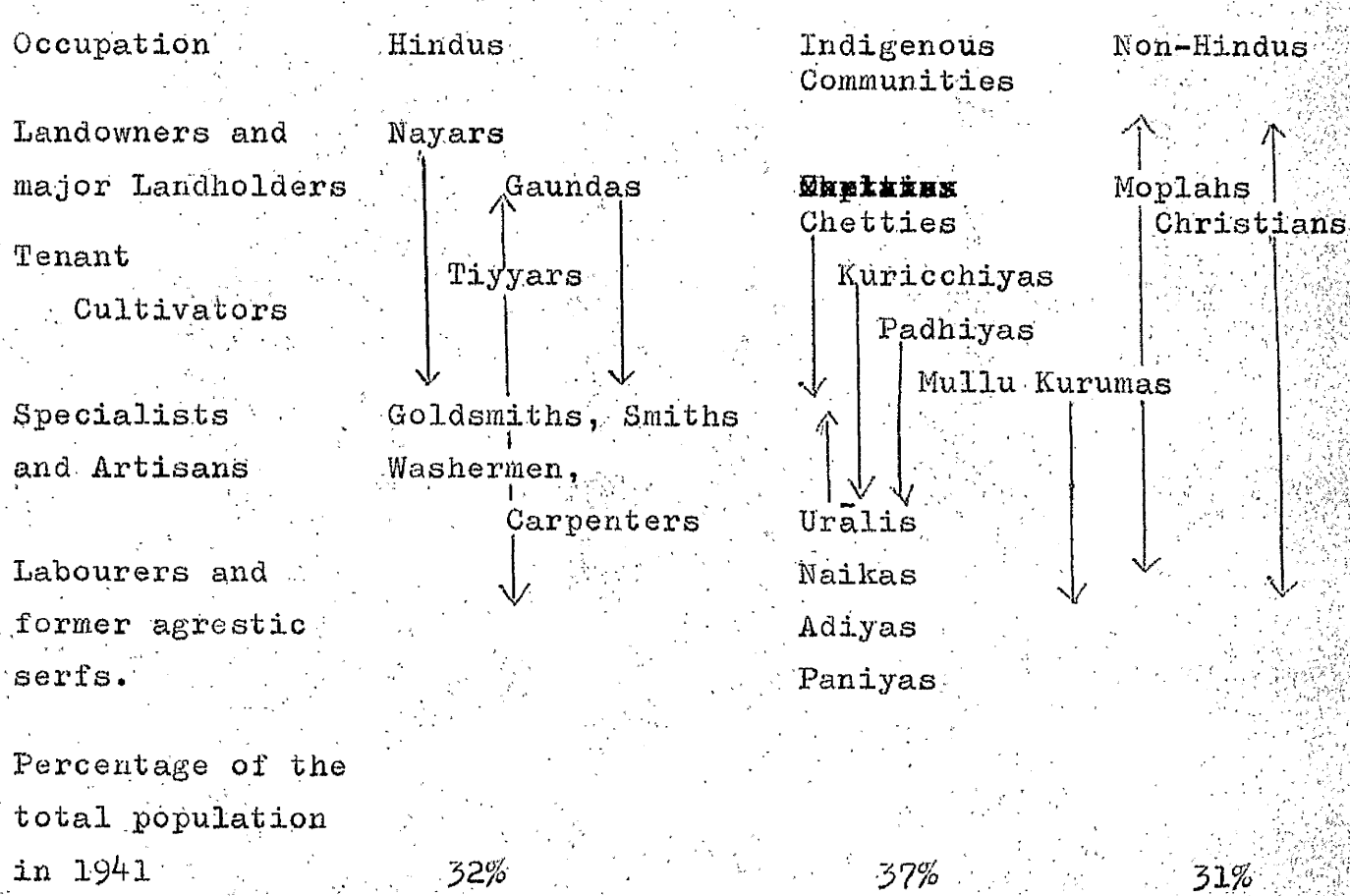
Social relations between the four categories are primarily interpersonal and utilitarian; the shopkeeper and his customer, the moneylender and his client, the landholder and his labourer. On the other hand communal ties transcending wide economic differences unite Hindus against non-Hindus, and autochthones against immigrants. These ties find expression not only in the formal groupings of caste but also in such organisations as that of the Wynad Ancient (1) Cultivator's Society, founded in 1954 by the Chetties, Padhiyas and Kurumas of South Wynad. Within this society, whose avowed object is mutual economic assistance and social uplift, Chetty landlords are prepared to unite with their former tenants the Kurumas

1) The Malayalam title is Adima Krshakar Sangham, or Association of autochthonous cultivators. The title given above is the official English rendering, "ancient" meaning indigenous.
2) J. S. Furnivall, "Netherlands Indies...", 1939: p. 446.

and Padhiyas, while excluding from the society both immigrants and the indigenous landless labouring castes of Paniyas and Naikas.

In the diagram below an approximate indication of the relative caste and economic status of some Wynad communities has been given. Relative caste status is indicated by the position in the diagram of the caste name, while the arrow or arrows leading from it give some idea of the spread in variations of economic status. It will be seen that the spread of Moplahs, Christians and Nayars is very great, but that of the former serf castes so slight as to be negligible.

Diagram showing relative status of some communities in Wynad.



Of the Hindu artisan and specialist castes it need only be said that they are few and widely scattered, living by conjugal families or even as isolated individuals. Those with families here

work at their place of residence; the single individuals are always men, often young, who have come to seek work and move from place to place. They settle for a season on contract with an employer, and do his work in return for lodging, at the same time doing casual work in the neighbourhood. In 1953 the services of a smith or carpenter cost Rs 2---8 a day, or could be had on piece-rates, an unskilled labourer being paid about half this amount. Their caste status is equivalent to or below that of most cultivating castes. This is important, as it enables them to take cooked food from their employers.

In coastal Malabar these artisan castes are further differentiated; for instance there are several sub-castes of washermen. These differences are minimised in Wynad, and at Nellivayal a single washerman of Vannān or Peruvannān caste served Nayars, Chetties, Padhiyas and Mullu Kurumas alike. I was told that this would probably not be the case in coastal Malabar, but that as washermen were few in Wynad the caste Hindus had to "take what they could get." Small status differences exist between the various artisan castes, which Stevenson suggests may have stemmed from the materials in which they work; thus a goldsmith working in precious metals ranks above a blacksmith, and he again above a cobbler working in leather. I have arbitrarily grouped the washerman with the artisan castes, though his function is really the ceremonial one of removing pollution contracted by women at childbirth or menstruation.

Of the communities peculiar to Wynad the most numerous is that of the Paniyas, literally "workers". They inhabit the paddy-growing areas of Wynad and Nilgiri Wynad. A few thousand more are found in

the adjacent parts of coastal Malabar and Coorg. Formerly agrestic serfs, they now form the bulk of the hired labour engaged in paddy cultivation. They figure in the conquest legend not as autochthones but as members of a ppimitive society living at the unidentified site of Ippi mala (hill), whence the Raja brought them as slaves to Wynad. Ethnically they are thought to be the oldest stratum of people surviving in Malabar, and their distinctive features, dress, and frizzy mop of hair make them readily recognisable to the stranger.

Economic differentiation has hardly affected them, and until very recently none of them owned or tenanted any land apart from the tiny garden that surrounds each isolated and exclusive Paniya hamlet (pādi). In the Colony area a few have been given land and assistance in cultivating it, but the experiment has not so far been very successful, perhaps because of the high wages paid to labourers in the immediate post-war years. Most prefer a certain cash wage at the end of a day's labour to the uncertain prospect of a paddy harvest which represents to them a long-term investment of capital and labour. The few fortunate Paniya Colonists regard the incomprehensible gift of land in terms of social status rather than economic wealth, and seem to find its management beyond their capacity. This we can attribute to the lure of cash wages already mentioned (1), to inadequate assistance and supervision by the Colony, and to the hostility and covert sneers of their higher caste neighbours.

1) A number of local men, including Kurumas, have told me that they find it more profitable to work as labourers than to cultivate their own land, normally a small-holding of two acres of wet land. Their calculations however involved the leasing out of this land. For a man without cattle or seed-paddy this calculation may well be correct.

Nineteenth century literature on Wynad refers to Paniyas as leaving the paddyfields to take up Estate work, but at the present day few of them are so employed. It is rather the Naikas who are engaged as garden labour, Paniyas being restricted to paddy cultivation. A large number of them are still employed by the same communities or even the same families as when they became legally free men a century ago. Where this is the case they continue to live in their exclusive hamlets. Some are now employed by immigrants, especially by Moplahs, and these have tended to leave their hamlets and establish themselves in isolated huts provided the new employer is prepared to give a site. Each Paniya is normally engaged by the year, commencing from the Ucchar festival, when the contract is sealed with an advance of paddy and the gift of a cloth. The employer provides two or three seers of paddy daily, and additional gifts periodically, normally at festivals. Over the entire period of employment the cash equivalent of all these payments is about one rupee a day. This is less than day wage-rates, and a further loss is sustained if the paddy is bartered for goods, but the mode of employment is valued as giving greater security than casual employment. Many employers now supplement the daily paddy payment with periodic payments of cash. The caste status of the Paniya is the lowest in Wynad, and below that of the Naika. This is probably due to the greater mobility and independence of the latter, who maintain social relations within the community over a greater area than do Paniyas. Moreover the existence of the Jēnu Kuruba community in the shelter of the forests reduces the dependence of the Naika on his master.

A third of the present population of Wynad is made up of non-Hindus, of Moplahs and the various Christian sects. The latter are newcomers to Wynad, and are for the most part landless peasants who have migrated from Travancore-Cochin. Some however have access to capital and have entered the commercial economy, in which the Moplah community is predominant. This concern with commerce has affected Moplah demography, particularly in South Wynad. Although a majority of the Moplahs are labourers and smallholders rather than shopkeepers, a tendency among immigrants to settle near co-religionists has kept them a roadside community, focussing on the little roadside bazaars where Moplah shops predominate. Hindus on the other hand tend to live and build away from the roads. This is strikingly demonstrated at Nellivayal, presently to be described.

As an instance of Moplah commercial control it may be mentioned that, of some 50 shops and private agencies in the South Wynad bazaar of Sultan's Battery, four are owned and run by Hindus, five by Christians, and all the rest by Moplahs. Three of the four hotels (1) are Moplah owned, and all the larger shops likewise. This was not always so, and Ward describes the place in 1828 as "a street of shops kept by a few Moplahs, but mostly by Malabar People", i.e. by Hindus. Several of the Moplahs of this bazaar have profited enormously during the post-war days of development and immigration, and have invested their profits in land. One of them now owns 200 acres of coffee estate and 5,000 of forest.

In many respects the Christians conform to the Moplah pattern of

1) In Malabar a hotel (sic) means a substantial building providing meals and other refreshment, but rarely lodgings. It is opposed to a teashop (chayyakatha, chayyapidi), providing only drinks and snacks.

economic activity. While most are labourers or smallholders, an increasing number are engaged in commerce, ranging from the humble roadside teashop to large stores and banks in the principal bazaars. In Sultan's Battery the cinema (1) is owned by a Syrian Christian, and the lucrative trade in bootlegged liquor is almost a Christian monopoly, possibly because they lack the Muslim religious objection to alcohol. This monopoly however does not extend to local small-scale distillation, which is mainly done by Tiyyars. In all other matters such as shop-keeping and moneylending the Christians now compete directly with the Moplahs, and are proving formidable competitors. The more successful members of both communities are those who had access from the first to capital and trading skill, usually through membership of, or kinship connections with, established businesses in the coastal tracts. This fact is commonly denied or ignored by the indebted Hindu peasant who, as we have mentioned, tends to stereotype the successful Moplah merchant as a mere peddlar who has grown rich by good luck and unscrupulous dealing.

Communal tension is slight, possibly because there is little proselytising. The 1921 Khilafat rising did not extend, save for one incident, to Wynad. Verbal criticism of communal stereotypes and alleged behaviour seems a sufficient safety-valve for this tension. And although the Kuruma peasant may denigrate the Moplah shopkeeper or moneylender, he is accustomed to deal with him, and seems actually to prefer to do so. A Moplah will advance an unsecured loan or give credit more readily than another, though his rate of interest may be higher;

1) The cinema building is a rough shelter of bamboo and matting, roofed with palm-leaves. Films in Malayalam and Tamil are shown at irregular intervals.

and he does not press for repayment as promptly as others. Chetty landowners for example, who sometimes lend paddy or cash, will make repeated visits to a Kuruma hamlet as soon as the debt falls due. This is highly embarrassing to the Kuruma debtor, who prefers the more discreet methods of the Moplah. The importance of the Moplah trader and moneylender to the Kuruma economy, as in the economy of Wynad as a whole, is very great, and is probably second only to that of the state. This connection might appear to contradict the definition of a plural society, but does not in fact do so. Kurumas and Moplahs meet and transact business, but they do not mingle. Despite his superior wealth and business acumen, and perhaps because of it, the Moplah is regarded as an inferior, contact with whom is ritually polluting. A Moplah may not enter a Kuruma hut, and is not welcome in the hamlet. Conservative-minded Kuruma men will not take tea in a Moplah teashop, and no Kuruma woman may take food or drink from a Moplah. More will be said on the nature of these relations in a subsequent chapter, in which a village dispute concerning illicit sexual relations between members of the two communities is recounted. This brief preliminary account is intended only to serve as a background to the almost exclusively Kuruma material to follow.

Note to Chapter II.

This note includes some population figures for Malabar Wynad selected from the decennial census. In the official figures giving a breakdown of the Hindu population in 1941-51 the categories are somewhat confusing. That of "Others" in the 1941 Census presumably covers the tribal population, yet we find it has doubled in the subsequent decade, presumably by the inclusion of new groups. But as Kingsley Davis remarks, the Census of India is at its least reliable in matters involving caste or tribal affiliation. An attempt to estimate the present strengths of selected Hindu and Tribal groups in Wynad has therefore been made.

1. Total population of Wynad Taluk.

Year	Total	Percentage increase or decline.
1901	75,149	-2%
1911	82,549	+10%
1921	84,771	+3%
1931	91,769	+8%
1941	106,350	+16%
1951	169,280	+60%

2. Breakdown by major religion, to the nearest thousand.

Year	Hindus	% of total	Muslims	% of total	Christians	% of total
1921	68,000	82.4%	14,000	16.4%	1,000	1.2%
1931	70,000	76.2%	18,000	19.5%	4,000	4.3%
1941	74,000	68.9%	28,000	26.4%	5,000	4.7%
1951	106,000	63.3%	37,000	21.9%	25,000	14.8%

3. Breakdown of the Hindu community in the 1941 and 1951 Censuses.

1941: Brahmins 1,135. Other Hindus 28,479. Scheduled Castes 25,289
Others 19,020

1951: Hindus 54,293. Scheduled Castes 12,144. Scheduled Tribes 39,994.

Estimated strength of selected Wynad communities in 1951.

Community		Strength	% of Hindus	% of all communities
Brahmins (all castes)		1,300	1.0	0.7
Nayars		12,000	11.3	7.1
Gaundas		800	0.8	0.5
Tiyyars		20,000	18.8	11.7
Vannāns (and other washermen)		600	0.5	0.4
Communities indigenous to Wynad:				
Wynādan Chetties		2,000	1.9	1.2
Mandādan Chetties		200	0.2	0.1
Edanādan Chetties		3,000	2.8	1.8
Kundovadiyas		250	0.2	0.1
Karimpālas	SC	40	-	-
Padhiyas		600	0.5	0.4
Kuricchiyas	SC	10,000	9.4	5.9
Kurumas	ST	10,000	9.4	5.9
Kādars	SC	700	0.5	0.4
Urālis		3,000	2.8	1.8
Thatchanādi Muppans		1,000	0.9	0.6
Naikas	ST	3,000	2.8	1.8
Adiyas		1,000	0.9	0.6
Pular	SC	300	0.3	0.2
Paniyas	ST	27,000	25.5	15.8

Note: The abbreviations SC and ST stand for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respectively. The total, about 97,000, leaves some 9,000 "Hindus" unaccounted for. These include artisans, Coorgs, Mysorean castes and others. The percentage figures are themselves approximate, and are over- rather than under-estimates.

Chapter III. The Hamlet.

III i. Recruitment and Organisation.

In this chapter I shall describe and analyse the organisation of the Kuruma hamlet, drawing illustrative material principally from the dozen or so hamlets of Nellivayal in South Wynad. The hamlet is an exogamous property-holding group of kinsmen living patrilocally. Hamlet membership, the principle of patrilocality, is one of two main organising principles in the community, of which the second is matrilineality. The Kurumas conceptualise them under the terms (in varying forms) kānam and chōre. Chōre means (literally) blood, and it can mean descent through the mother; kānam is a more complex and difficult term. Literally it means 'sight', but among the Kurumas, and throughout Kerala, it connotes property, especially landed property, held on a long-term but still temporary basis. It may also connote money, and especially the cash sum paid in respect of a tenure.

Kuruma matriliny is diffuse, i.e. only weakly organised on a corporate basis. The whole community is organised into four matriclans, but these are dispersed and without Clan Headmen, cults, or cult-centres. Their sole obvious function is to direct marriage, as they are exogamous uni hin each matriclan is an indeterminate number of small matrigroups, weakly structured and constantly fissuring, which fulfil ritual roles in the lives of their members. These units and their roles are discussed in the next chapter.

The Kurumas do not see themselves as a matrilineal society, although matriliny is traditionally the prestige form of descent and inheritance in Kerala. They describe themselves as 'makkattayam', implying patrilineal descent and inheritance, as opposed to marumakkattayam, the term for matriliny. These two terms are 'blanket' terms used all over the Dravidian-speaking areas of South India, perhaps concealing differences as significant as those they reveal. They represent models, and it is significant that the Kurumas should make this verbal assimilation with the patrilineal model. The hamlet, as the unit of everyday co-operation, is for them the principal unit of organisation apart from the conjugal family. It is a local group (kudi) but it is also seen, in terms of its personnel alone, as a taravād (1), a lineage or lineage-segment which is also a property-holding joint family. In fact the hamlet is not a joint family, but contains elements of jointness, which are valued and exaggerated. It is not a patrilineage, but it may act as though it were, in exhibiting segmentary properties that complement the horizontal division into generations. Ninety per cent. of all Kurumas live in hamlets, and virtually all the remainder, though they may have settled elsewhere, continue as members of their parent hamlets, with duties towards them and continuing rights in them.

Many types of residential grouping occur in Wynad, of which the hamlet is only one. The higher castes traditionally lived in joint

1) This normally but not necessarily connotes a matrilineal joint family, especially of the Nayars; but some Nayars are patrilineal. Other terms describing the group include kudumba (family) and vītukare, or House-people; cf. Haimendorf op. cit., pp. 28ff. His "wutekara" is a phonetic form of vītukare.

family groups, unilineally recruited, and inhabiting a single large house or complex of buildings of specialised function. The lower castes inhabited compact settlements of similar, largely unspecialised huts, each hut being the residence of a single conjugal family. Such a settlement I describe as a hamlet, but it must be emphasised that, say, a Paniyan hamlet (pera) differs greatly from a Kuruma hamlet (kudi) in the organisation of its personnel, and to some extent in its physical appearance. Immigrants to Wynad do not live in hamlets or in joint or extended families, but by single conjugal families, each on its own property. There is a tendency for the indigenous communities to follow this example, which offers marked economic advantages, but as yet it has affected the higher castes rather than the lower, and the Kurumas less than some other lower castes.

Recruitment of members to a Kuruma hamlet may be by birth or by adoption at marriage. Full membership of the hamlet as a land-holding and ceremonial corporation is restricted to grown males, and is automatically conferred upon them when their first marriage is conducted in the hamlet. Any full male member can recruit new members to the hamlet in the next generation. They may be his own children by his wife, or they may be the children of his wife by a previous marriage, in another hamlet. Two or more marriages by a woman may confer membership rights in as many hamlets on her offspring by those marriages; but this potential choice of hamlet membership lasts only until each child grows up. They must then make a choice between these hamlets; and in choosing one, they

automatically lose their affiliation to all the rest.

The marriage ceremony, with its associated cash payments and consultation of the hamlet gods (or House gods), is thus of basic importance in determining ascription to or exclusion from, hamlet membership. The stability of marriage (in the jural sense of that term) determines the frequency with which a choice of paters and of hamlets is opened to the individual. A preliminary statistical analysis shows that about half, or rather more than half of all Kurumas contract only one marriage in their lives. It is not easy to be precise on a figure, since many variables are involved, and the number of completed marriages about which reliable information can be gained is small. Genealogies, especially in extinct generations, tend to record only the choice made, not the choices open.

There is evidence that marriage has recently become more stable. The modern Kuruma, influenced perhaps by Sanskritic or Western values, sets high value on a lifelong monogamous union. Marriage, especially the first marriage, is becoming costlier than in the past, with brideprice averaging Rs 100; ten times what it was one generation ago.

Birth is the preferred form of gaining hamlet membership. The individual grows up into the hamlet community in greater security. He may boast of this, as against the membership by adoption of another member, though both may enjoy full rights in the hamlet, succeed to any office, and occupy an unequivocal place in its structural system of generations and segments. This is not the case with what I have termed "exterior members", of whom a few

exist in most of the larger hamlets. These are usually men of another hamlet who have chosen to live mulierilocally. They tend to be very poor, and were often employed as herdsman in the first instance. Neither they nor, in theory, their descendants can ever acquire full membership, though they acquire residential membership and conform with the structural ties of the hamlet. The sons of such a settler may be born in the hamlet, and must observe its exogamous limits as though they were full members, but they are still debarred from holding office in it. Possibly in the third or fourth generation they acheive full membership.

Table showing recruitment of grown males to 10 hamlets at Nellivayal.

Name of hamlet	Full members born in hamlet	Full members born elsewh--ere.	Others	Total
Atthiyūr (Lower)	8	1	-	9
" (Upper)	3	-	-	3
Kālambilau	5	-	-	5
Mākutti	12	5	2	19
Mukūl	10	1	-	11
Nochamvayal (Lower)	5	4	1	10
" (Upper)	16	1	3	20
Thodūti (East)	3	-	-	3
" (West)	7	4	2	13
Totapora	4	3	-	7
Totals	73	19	8	100

Thus at Nellivayal about 8% of the resident males in these hamlets are exterior members, and about 20% have chosen membershi

as against a possible alternative hamlet, although they were not born here. The crude figure of 73% requires more comment. Some of the members born into a hamlet may have been born to the same father by different mothers, and some to the same mother by different fathers, since leviratic unions are permitted. Thus the youngest sister of the three brothers inhabiting Upper Atthiyūr was born to the same mother by her second husband, Kāshū. This is represented on the Atthiyūr genealogy given below. Kāshū had a son by his first wife, who then left him to remarry elsewhere, taking the child with her. This boy is still unmarried, and in theory may yet claim his rights in Atthiyūr, as the brothers admit. But in fact he can hardly do so. The reality of choice falls far short of its potential. The boy has never revisited Atthiyūr, and should he do so, the brothers are not in a position to maintain him, share property with him, or meet the expense of finding him a wife.

Before carrying any further this exposition I propose to give a brief description of the physical appearance of a Kuruba hamlet. It forms a compact settlement of separate dwelling huts, sited rectangularly about courtyards of hard-packed earth. The nucleus of each hamlet is the Great Hut, indistinguishable in appearance from any other hut, but serving as the common shrine. Before it lies the Great Courtyard, enclosed on each side by ordinary dwelling huts. As a hamlet expands, other courtyards are formed about the original one, and defined by the huts standing foursquare about them. These subsidiary courtyards are differentiated by being called "upper", or "lower", or after elders whose huts abut

upon them. Occasionally short streets are found, where some natural obstacle prevents regular expansion.

The hamlet site is accounted joint property by the members, and is so returned in the records of the Administration, but in practise is parcelled out into shares, ultimately controlled by the Headman, but immediately controlled by a particular elder. Thus when a youth marries, and a new hut must be built for him, his father may allocate him the site of his dead grandfather's ruined hut, on one side of the same courtyard. The Headman's permission and blessing should be asked, but when the transfer of rights is directly from father to son this is largely formal. Thus within each hamlet there appears a fairly consistent grouping of the most closely related members within different sectors of the hamlet.

In size Kuruma hamlets vary between a maximum of about 35 huts and a single hut. Upper Atthiyūr is a hamlet of fairly recent foundation, and for the first decade or more of its existence it consisted of a Great hut only. In a rough survey of all the hamlets that could be identified, some 350, it was found that 190 consisted of fewer than five conjugal families, 123 of five families or more up to a total of 20, and that 38 were of 20 conjugal families or more, up to a maximum of 35. The total number of Kuruma hamlets is unlikely to exceed 400, and the unidentified 50 or less are probably all very small hamlets indeed. The average

number of families to a hamlet is about five.

Each conjugal family occupies its own hut, and in size averages fractionally under 5 persons. In the larger hamlets the total number of occupied dwellings tends to exceed the number of resident families because two or more huts are allocated as sleeping quarters for the young bachelors of the hamlet. These are segregated by sex, so that there are usually either two dormitories or none in a hamlet. The dormitory huts are privately owned and maintained, and the owner may resume their possession at any time if he needs them for other purposes. Not all the youths or girls of a hamlet necessarily sleep in a dormitory, even should their hamlet boast one, and there is none of the complex and institutionalised dormitory life that Elwin described as existing among the tribals of Bastar.

Residence within the hamlet is exclusive to caste members, and privacy is given by the belt of gardens and trees that surrounds it. In the gardens storehuts are built, and in these shelter is sometimes given to individuals of the artisan castes whose services are needed in the hamlet and neighbourhood. This arrangement is essentially temporary, and a private matter between the artisan and the owner of the storehut, whose client he is. It may continue for a few days only, or for months at a time. The artisan, typically a smith or carpenter, is not regarded as a member of the hamlet in any but the crudest economic sense.

Of the ten Nellivayal hamlets listed above, three accomodated non-Kuruma residents during 1954, all being Hindu immigrants from coastal Malabar. Upper Nochamvayal sheltered a carpenter, Lower Atthiyūr a goldsmith, and MukūL a blacksmith. The distinction between membership of, and residence in, a Kuruma hamlet reaches its maximum with this category of persons. They reside in the hamlet periphery rather than among the courtyards, though they are allowed to enter them. They are expected to avoid the Great courtyard when any ceremony is being conducted there, and may not enter the Great hut.

The Great hut, as I have said, is a shrine. It houses the Ancestor spirits of the dead members of the hamlet, and also the gods of that hamlet. Their priest is the hamlet Headman, who controls their worship, and all hamlet ceremonial. He also can dispose of the Great hut, living in it himself, or allotting it to another person. He also controls the joint property of the hamlet, which includes the hamlet site, the contents of the hamlet cash-box, and possibly both land and chattels in addition. All decisions affecting the hamlet as a whole are supposed to be taken by him; or if they are reached by agreement, to be announced by him. His office is held by succession, not by election. This succession is by genealogical seniority; i.e. the hamlet Headman is the senior man of the senior generation of living members of a hamlet. Should seniority by age and by generation ever conflict, seniority by generation is decisive.

The Headman occupies two major sets of statuses in the hamlet. In personal kinship roles he may be father, father's elder brother, grandfather and so forth, but in respect of his office dyadic relations tend to exist between him and the other hamlet members, irrespective of generation difference. His uniqueness, and that of the Great hut which he controls, are stressed. The terms used towards him by his juniors include Headman (muppan), Old Man (moravan), and Big Man (valiyovan). In all ceremonial contexts the reference term used for him is Man who Can (pōranōn, or the more respectful form, pōranthiri), the man who is able and sufficient. His putative successor, whom I term the Headman Elect the man next most senior genealogically, is the Man who Cannot (pōrāthōn, or pōrāthiri).

Moreover the Headman-Elect does not bear this title unless he is of the same generation as the Headman. If he is of the next generation he has no title, though he performs the functions of a Headman Elect. When he finally succeeds to the Headman's office he is known only as Junior Headman (pōrankanyakuti) for the next year or more. In this situation the break between generations is stressed. Eventually, and by the decision of the hamlet gods as expressed through a Shamanistic medium, the new Headman is granted his proper title of Man who Can, his successor that of Man who Cannot, and the former dyadic relation is restressed.

In this situation the Headman associates himself with the gods and Ancestors, his juniors of the hamlet with the secular

world. He likens himself to the landlord (janmi) of a property, whereas his juniors are his tenants and servants (kudiyans). In everyday speech a Headman will refer to a junior who he does not wish to specify as a "young child" (kanyakuti) or a servant (valiyakāraa), though generally not when the person referred to is of his own generation. In the language of the gods, employed when consulting them through a medium, all the juniors save the Headman elect are collectively referred to as "lower shoots", or "lesser shoots" (kīlankadde), i.e. shoots of vegetable growth; for the hamlet personnel is overtly likened to a tree of which the Headman alone is the trunk, he himself bearing aloft all the branches and smaller shoots.

This division of the hamlet personnel into the Man who Can and the remainder who cannot is primarily a ritual one, deriving from the Headman's unique position as priest of the Ancestors and of the gods of the hamlet, or House-gods; but it also tends to spill over into secular matters, with the Headman exaggerating his rights over property and over the jural and political relations of the hamlet.

The personnel of each hamlet are also divided horizontally into generations (kūr) and vertically into segments or tāyams, a word meaning a portion or inheritance. The senior living generation in a hamlet is always known as the father-generation (appankūr), while below it comes that of the sons (magankūr). There are also terms for the third generation, or grandson's

generation (mūnānkūr, or pērankūr), though these latter are not often used. The ritual offices of Headman and Headman Elect succeed adelphically along each generation, ignoring the segments. Property normally descends from father to son, or to son and wife's son, a share being given to each at or soon after his marriage, though legal partition is often delayed until the father dies or grows very old.

A son who has potential rights in another hamlet, or a wife's son by a previous marriage, may decide to claim hamlet membership elsewhere; but in doing so he would automatically lose membership here, and also property rights here, though theoretically each of his mother's husbands might make out a legally valid will in his favour. No instance of this is known, though there are several cases of men holding property in one hamlet while they live in another. An example is Chinnan of Atthiyūr. He remains a full member of Atthiyūr, where he was born, and where he has inherited a share of his father's property, but a few years ago he decided to settle near his conjugal hamlet, Kappala. As a temporary measure he was given accomodation in Kappala, but has since acquired land nearby and set up his own hut on it. This is not a hamlet, for he has no Great hut or House-gods there, but must return periodically to his natal hamlet at the major festivals and crises. His land at Atthiyūr is cultivated by a uterine younger brother, who pays Chinnan a small annual sum in respect of it. Eventually Chinnan may hand it over to him completely, or allot it to one of his own sons.

These sons are potential members of Atthiyūr, even though not born there, since their father is himself a member. They are not members of Kappala, though they might be able to claim external membership, without property rights or rights of succession. On the other hand Chinnan might one day break with Atthiyūr and establish his new settlement (ōlamakudi) as a new hamlet. In such an event, the son could choose between Atthiyūr and the new hamlet. His choice however must be made before his marries. If Chinnan wishes to establish him in Atthiyūr, he cannot sever his own connection with it until this is arranged.

If a man like Chinnan establishes himself away from the hamlet but wishes to remain a member of it, he is obliged to return there for all major rites de passage of its members, as well as those directly involving his own family. He must also attend the chief annual festivals, and notably that of Ucchar. Simple non-attendance of these ceremonies over a period of one or two years is held to terminate membership, though the tie of exogamy continues for as long as memory retains it; usually some three generations. Along with the memory of membership persists the possibility of renewing it, provided no other membership has been contracted. It can be renewed on payment of a fine and the expression of sorrow even though years may have elapsed. Even if a hamlet member leaves in agger after formally expressing his determination to end his membership, it is possible that he may secure readmittance one day, if the Headman and the House gods are prepared to accept his apology and a fine can be agreed on.

New hamlets are continually branching off from those already established, founded by members who leave in anger, or, like Chinnan, for their economic advantage. A settlement established for the latter motive is likely to delay the achievement of hamlet status for a period of years, but a man leaving in anger may wish to become independent of the ritual services of his hamlet Headman as soon as possible, by establishing his own House-gods independently in the new settlement. Distance too is a factor to be taken into account. A hamlet established some miles away under the protection of a different Locality god and Headman than the parent settlement will break its ties with it sooner rather than later. The usual time at which a settlement establishes itself as a hamlet is when its founder dies. His sons may then bury him locally instead of carrying his body for burial in the graveyard of the parent hamlet. His ghost can then be inducted to his former dwelling hut, which becomes the Great hut. This the establishment of a separate Ancestor cult certainly marks the change of status; but it is not essential to wait for this event. A man leaving his hamlet in anger and founding a new settlement can claim that the settlement is of hamlet status once one or more House-gods have been established there.

The "independence" of a branch settlement, and the severance of ties with the parent hamlet are a matter of degree in most cases. For so long as the patrilateral connection between the two is "kept alive", and the members of the two hamlets recognise a common generation system embracing them both, we can regard them

as forming a single patrigroup, or two segments of the same patrigroup. Certain offices may pass within this group from one hamlet to the other, according as to which contains the most senior living member---by generation, and not by age alone. We must exclude from this any exterior members of the hamlet. They may be accepted into the hamlet yet excluded from the patrigroup, from its Ancestor cult, and from succession to any office in the hamlet. They are not however debarred from entering the Great hut as guests, or from joining the hamlet congregation when the gods are consulted.

Memory may preserve a patrilateral tie from which virtually all content has faded; ceremonial cooperation has ceased, and generation kinship terms can no longer be used save by guesswork. An example is the link between Tōtapora hamlet at Nellivayal, and Mottankara, ten miles away in another Locality. Both hamlets are said to have been established by settlers from Māndakolli, a hamlet that became extinct at least 30 years ago. No visits or social exchanges take place between them, but the memory of the link is still sufficient to inhibit intermarriage between them. I was told that marriage would become a possibility "when our elders have died, and we no longer remember the link"; but it seems also that, supposing a Tōtapora youth eloped with a girl of Mottankara, their union might be regularised on payment of a money fine to the House-gods of both hamlets. This would both atone for the incest, if any, and break the patrilateral tie.

This behaviour would not be possible between them had

continuous ties been kept up; and the factor most likely to ensure this, would be territorial proximity. Tōtapora and Mottankara are ten miles apart, and in different Localities. On the other hand at Nellivayal we find a group of hamlets claiming a common origin quite as remote genealogically as that linking Mottankara and Tōtapora. Physical proximity and regular co-operation in ritual, economic, and political matters has kept alive the real or alleged patrilateral tie between them. We could therefore speak of them as forming a single patrigroup, which we could not do of Tōtapora and Mottankara.

These hamlets are the two Nochamvayals, Kālambilau, and East Thodūti, sometimes referred to collectively as the nālu taravād, the Four Taravāds. Some of them have established settlements and branch hamlets at some distance from Nellivayal; and two long-established hamlets at Nellivayal, Mokatta and West Thoduti, also claim to be members of this patrigroup. The total number of members, counting wives and young children, is about 200. During the period of fieldwork this group was sharply divided into two rival factions over the succession of an office, long held by one particular hamlet, which had lately passed to another in the patrigroup. The theoretical basis of the dispute was, for the Kurumas, whether the office was vested in a single hamlet permanently, or whether it is mobile within the wider patrigroup.

This dispute, or various aspects of it, will be referred to from time to time. Here I wish to comment on only one aspect

of it; the fact that the hamlet of West Thoduti, while taking sides in the dispute, did not regard itself as a competitor for the office, despite the fact that its Headman was genealogically more senior than any other member of the total patrigroup. My first enquiries about this paradox were met with the answer: "long ago our elders resigned their claims to the office, so we cannot now claim it ourselves." The "long ago" could not be dated, but the Thoduti genealogy suggests that it was only founded three generations ago.

Further investigations made it seem reasonably certain that Thoduti's connection with the Nochamvayal patrigroup had originated not by settlement and branching, but by intermarriage. The hamlet founder appears to have entered East Thoduti as a herdboy or labourer, and to have been given a wife from that hamlet. Later hex or his sons established themselves nearby in what is now West Thoduti; the affinal tie became a kinship tie, and it has now come to be regarded as a patrilateral one. It is not possible to prove beyond doubt that this was the case, but circumstantial evidence and parallel instances make it seem probable. The short-depth genealogies of the hamlets make it impossible to be certain of the nature of such a tie after three generations have passed, and even if it ever existed. Such a situation would offer an explanation of why West Thodūti is excluded from succession to the disputed office. Its position in the total patrigroup is analogous to that of an exterior member in a hamlet. He too may not succeed to an office,

that of hamlet Headman, though he is a member of the hamlet, and is addressed by kinship terms appropriate to his age and status. His sons, born in the hamlet, may or may not succeed to the Headmanship, but their sons are almost certain to do so. In the case of a hamlet however the case is somewhat different. In the hamlet, the individual member succeeds, and he is unique, whereas in the case of a hamlet claiming an office for one of its members, previous experience will show that such claims have not been made before, or if made, have been invalidated while the precise nature of its original tie with the office-holding group was still clearly remembered as matrilateral.

The nature of ties between hamlets is further discussed in later sections. It is sufficient here to have made the point that a patrigroup may extend beyond the hamlet, much as a Nayar matrilineage may extend over several taravāds: with the major difference that the limits of the matrilineage are clearly defined whereas those of the Kuruma patrigroup are not, owing to the fact that it is a non-unilineal descent group (1). Assymetric merging with it may take place by the patrigroup to which a bride was originally given, as in the case of Thoduti, thus linking two or more hamlets together, or an individual may acheive membership by birth or by subsequent affiliation. Coresidence and rights in property sharply distinguish these two categories, and it is to the hamlet as an economic unit that we next turn.

1) This term has been adopted from the "nonunilinear" of Davenport in his article in "American Anthropologist", LXI no. 4, of 1959.

III ii ; The Hamlet Economy.

Though Kurumas tend to describe their caste occupation as hunting, they are in fact sedentary cultivators. A Kuruma proverb says: "our wealth consists in paddy and cattle, nuts and blossoms" ---the two latter terms meaning sons and daughters. The inclusion of youths and maidens in this curt list is as significant as the omission from it of land as a form of wealth. By tradition, land is plentiful in Wynad, and to be had for the asking; in the past from a Nayar, Gaundan or Chetty landlord (1), and at the present day from the State. Greater importance is attached to the means of cultivation; seed and ploughing-cattle; boys to plough and tend the herds, girls to milk the cattle and help at harvest. Mention of the young may be a wry reference to Kuruma poverty in material things, but it is also a reference to the duty of the young to supply labour to their seniors.

Tradition and some material evidence suggest that in the past each Kuruma hamlet practised a joint economy, or that a greater degree of jointness existed than at the present day. It is said that a block of land was allocated by the local landlord to each hamlet as it was established, his dealings with it being channelled through the Headman or through some more capable member of it chosen by the landlord himself. As the hamlet expanded in size, more land might be added to the block, but the whole would

1) Usually from a Nayar; Gaundans are very few in Wynad, and in the Kuruma tract Chetties are not numerous. Only two Gaundan families, now both extinct, are remembered as former landlords. One of these, at Edakkal, has been succeeded by a Chetty family.

continue as a unit, relations being mediated through one Kuruma elder to the landlord. It is also said that hamlets were smaller in those days than they are today. Through this agent rent was paid in kind (paddy) to the landlord. The tenancy was unwritten and from year to year, but since the hamlet was a fairly stable unit the tenancy was a customary or semi-permanent one. Within the hamlet-group plots were allocated by the Headman or manager, one to each conjugal family, when the whole was not cultivated jointly.

This tradition is sometimes attributed to the remote Vēdan forebears of the Kurumas (1), but more often to recent times, and even to the present day. Informants have several times told me of Kuruma hamlets where a truly joint economy still obtained, with the Headman or manager collecting the entire harvest in a common store and allocating the paddy weekly to each household; or in small hamlets supplying it to the juniormost wife in the hamlet, who would cook for the whole group under the superintendance of the Headman's wife or Great senior woman (valiyamuti).

Visits to some of these hamlets did not bear out what I had been told. Probably there is no hamlet larger than two or three conjugal households in size that could claim to have a joint economy of this type. These informants were themselves never members of the hamlets they described, but young men brought recently into contact with them for the first time, usually through marriage. They spoke of them with evident pride in being connected

1) Compare Furer-Haimendorf on Jēnu Kuruba economy at Muthanga on the Wynad-Mysore border, op. cit. p. 22.

with such hamlets. Their statements serve to emphasise the value which Kurumas set upon jointness and co-operation in a hamlet.

The origin of this misunderstanding lies somewhere between anxiety to idealise a spouse's hamlet, and the ambiguities of the term 'joint' in Kuruma usage. There is a major distinction between individual (sondham) property and joint (kūte) property, but in cases outside their immediate concern Kurumas often fail to distinguish between property joint to the whole patrigroup and that which is joint only to a segment of it. A possible reason for this is that partition, if not made in the lifetime of the individual holder, tends to become the concern not merely of his sons as coparceners, but of the entire hamlet.

Kurumas, moreover, are hereditary tenants rather than owners of land, and in youth are fairly mobile between hamlets (as when their mother marries several husbands successively), potentially acquiring property rights in each. This situation may help to keep alive the sentiment of joint rights in the land. The children can claim only their father's land, but he may turn for extra land to his brothers and to the Headman, arguing that the children are their common children, and offering a share of their labour.

The ideal of jointness applies to cattle equally with land. The men of West Thodūti own 96 cattle, of which 56 are said to form a herd "joint" to four elders and their sons, of different segments of the patrigroup. The remaining 40 cattle are partitioned among three elders and their sons. In practice the

"joint" herd is already allocated among the coparceners, but they emphasise that no final partition has yet occurred. The criteria of jointness here is that the four families still use a common pen and threshing floor, and share the labour of herding. One of these four elders recently celebrated the wedding of one of his two sons, and to meet the expense he sold one animal from the herd; before doing so he had to get the assent of the other elders, though this animal was among those allocated to him by the informal division.

Special circumstances bind this group of elders together, though they are of different segments of the patrigroup. One of them is childless, and two others have daughters but no sons. There is therefore no pressure for partition from competing married sons; and the two sons of the fourth elder may eventually inherit the entire "joint" herd and partition it between themselves. Meanwhile the four elders (one of whom is the Headman) congratulate themselves upon their conformity to an ideal pattern of property-holding, and use it to condemn those who have partitioned. Supernatural sanctions, wielded by the House-gods and Ancestor spirits, validate unity (orumē) of the patrigroup, and though this ideal primarily affects the hamlet-group as a ceremonial corporation, it also extends to property. The private owners of cattle in the hamlet have prospered materially, but are condemned by the elders of the "joint" group for their selfishness; especially one of them who is said to have initiated partition of the total herd. In 1953 this man began to lose his eyesight, and died in 1955. Both misfortunes are attributed to divine anger by the "joint" group; and most other Kurumas in the neighbourhood concurred with this opinion.

In the fully joint hamlet, all property is registered in the name of the Headman, or is administered by him. Labour is provided by the juniors under his direction, these being his younger brothers and their sons. He mediates the relations of the group with both the material and supernatural worlds. He pays the land revenue or rent, and controls labour sold outside the hamlet. In the past he was the channel through which higher-caste landowners distributed their paddy for parboiling and pounding (kū:lam). The Headman would send his juniors to collect the paddy in sacks, and distribute it among the households for women to process it. This institution has virtually disappeared in Wynad, the bigger producers preferring rice-mills. Meals were usually eaten separately (save on ceremonial occasions), but cooking was done communally in the Great hut by the juniormost wife supervised by the Headman's wife (or Headwoman).

Upper Atthiyūr hamlet at Nellivayal provides an instance of such a system in process of breaking down. The hamlet was founded about 1920 by a member of the Lower Atthiyūr patrigroup; and today contains three uterine brothers, an unmarried sister, and their widowed mother. Kallu the eldest brother is Headman; and both he and the middle brother Kullan are married men with families. The hamlet remained joint until the 1952/3 harvest, eight years after Kullan's marriage, and one year after his first son was born. In 1953 he withdrew his labour from the group, and at the same time the youngest (unmarried) brother was turned away by Kallu on a charge of stealing paddy from the common store.

The hamlet lies within the Colony area, and under the prevailing

system a local maximum holding of two acres of paddyland per conjugal family has ensured that the four acres held by the hamlet cannot all be retained by the Headman, and used in coercion; two acres are registered in his name and two in that of Kullan. The youngest brother has a customary right to a share in this land, but he cannot enforce it; and as he is unmarried he cannot apply for fresh land to the Colony with any hope of success. He cannot marry without the permission and help of his elder brothers, particularly of the eldest as hamlet Headman; and for subsistence he has been forced to sell his labour outside the hamlet. At one time he quitted the hamlet altogether, but was unable to establish himself elsewhere.

The Headman's wife Sītha gave me the following account of the process of disintegration:

> "In the past there were only two huts and a store-shed in our hamlet. Kullan and his wife lived in the Great hut, and she as junior wife did all the cooking for us. But she used to water down the rice-grual (kanji), and saved all the choicest morsels for herself or her husband. I, as senior wife, did all the serving, and Kallu was for ever blaming me for the badness of the food; so I used to quarrel with Chirutha (Kullan's wife). Then one night, without a word of warning or apology, Kullan and his wife moved into the storehut and began to cook separately. They converted it into a separate dwelling hut, and against all custom and proper behaviour, built the doorway facing away from the Great hut. This is bad for the hamlet, and displays our disunity to the world; and from that day on we have not prospered.

This account suggests the role of fissuring agents often attributed to rival wives in a joint household; however, once the split was acheived, this rivalry was modified. In subsequent months,

and particularly after Chirutha bore her fourth child with Sitha's assistance, their friendship was emphasised in conduct and conversation; both women would say: "We women are friends, and it is our husbands who are always quarrelling. What would happen if it were not form our friendship I do not know!"

Between the brothers the conflict lay over labour rather than the division of property. The two younger brothers insisted that they did all the work while the eldest did nothing. He on the other hand emphasised his role as priest and manager, and his prescriptive right to the labour of his juniors:

> "I think that Kullan is trying to ruin me! Though I am Headman and he is a junior, he does not help with the work at all; he even wants my two acres of paddyland. He thought that as I had not begun ploughing yet, he could do so; and in fact began to plough my land. So I put down a seed-bed to show him I did intend to cultivate this year, and he soon stopped his ploughing after that! I am confident that I can cultivate my land this year----ten men will come and help me if I ask them!"

The reference to "ten men" (= many men) is to the voluntary labour group in which a number of neighbours and kinsmen co-operate in ploughing each other's land in turn.

Kallu went on to complain of alleged thefts of paddy by Kullan's wife and by the youngest brother Ucchan; and stressed his own priestly role in the group:

> "Soon after this quarrel, Kullan's eldest daughter fell ill, and seemed like to die. They would not tell me, but Chirutha told my wife, and she told me. I took the girl into the Great hut and prayed for her, and she soon recovered, such is my power.

> Another instance of Kullan's enmity was when he bought a pair of Mysore bullocks without asking my permission or blessing. As a result one of them died within the week, when they were brought here!"

With land and labour thus partitioned, the joint herd of ten or eleven buffaloes was the next source of disagreement. Kallu declined to partition it, and Kullan therefore bought an inferior pair of ploughing bullocks, rather than beg his brother for the use of buffaloes. The labour of tending and milking the herd of buffaloes falls in great part on the widowed mother of these men, and her voice was of importance in reaching the decision not to partition the herd. She took Kallu's side because he maintains her. Kullan also has a duty to maintain her, but finds it difficult to carry out because he has no share of the herd, and because his wife's widowed mother spends long periods living with them. The mother also feels that her position in the hamlet is stronger while the herd is undivided; a complete partition might leave her starving. She said:

> "We did discuss partitioning the herd, but after we did so, five of the animals died, so we don't talk about it any more. My eldest son shall keep them all, though we may give some he-buffaloes to the juniors for ploughing."

Her statement again exhibits the value set upon jointness, the belief that it is supernaturally sanctioned, and the traditional organisation of the joint group. The senior brother is master of the herd, and his juniors work for him. They have rights to the labour of the herd, and may be given ploughing animals but not a female that might form the nucleus of a separate herd, unless there is partition. The femaleshave added importance today as a source of cash from the

sale of their milk and milk-products to Moplah tea-shops. This cash is all kept by Kallu, who himself does the selling.

Nowadays the only property in a Kuruma hamlet that can truly be considered as joint is the Great hut or hamlet shrine. In it lives the Headman, or a family authorised by him to do so. By tradition it is successively occupied by the junior married couple of the hamlet, but this is not always observed. The hut, which is little different from any other in appearance, is jointly built and maintained, and for hamlet ceremonies all grown male members of the hamlet have the right of access. It often occupies the site of the hut first built by the original founder of the hamlet.

Virtually all other property is privately held. The hut-sites and gardens of a hamlet are described as joint (kūte- or taravād-sotth -e) property, and are registered on a single name in Government land records, but in practice are also partitioned. A man inherits one or more hut-sites from his father or brother, and these remain his even though he allows some other person to build thereon. The ~~shedy~~ gardens surrounding every hamlet are deemed joint, but these too are partitioned, a man's share being inherited by his sons, or by his uterine brothers if he has no son. Each holder of a share contributes towards the annual tax a sum proportionate to the size of his share. This tax is collected by the man in whose name the whole property is registered, and handed over by the latter to the intercaste village Headman (Adhigāri). Hamlet sites less than half an acre in area are tax-free, but most hamlets include part or all of the surrounding gardens on the same document, and the total area may exceed this limit by a margin of several acres.

The site is often registered in the name of the hamlet Headman, but sometimes it is in that of one of the juniors, who is then called the Manager: the chemi or jamakāran----literally, the holder of the jama or janmam, the birthright. The office of Manager succeeds filially, unlike that of the Headman. Ideally the Headman is also Manager, and Kurumas say that this was always so. One of the reasons why the offices have become separated may be the introduction of Government documents after the survey of 1886-9 which, as material objects, might be more likely to be transmitted filially than unwritten rights. Other reasons are intervention by a landlord, or rebellion by the juniors to deprive a dishonest or incompetent Headman of managerial office. Though a Headman were expelled he might retain his documents, though the juniors acknowledged another man as de facto Manager and Headman. The documents and the office thereby divorced might remain separated.

There is evidence that in some hamlets a landlord personally intervened to appoint a client or more able man as Manager, though this intervention is now a thing of the past, and would not necessarily involve documented rights, but only the handling of the landlord's rental. In a few hamlets more than one Manager is recognised, though the individual holding the documents concerning the hamlet site is recognised as the principal Manager. The others may hold documents concerning a section of the garden lands subsequently acquired, and since divided among the descendants of those holding this new land. Genealogies are of limited help in tracing back succession, since Kuruma patrigroups are of small depth, and are unreliable

Skeleton Genealogy

of

Upper and Lower Atthiyūr hamlets

Note:

Males only are shown.

The black line is that of quasi-patrilineal descent; the red shows succession of the post of Manager.

An arrow indicates that that person has left the hamlet to live elsewhere.

Numerals show order of seniority within a generation.

before about 1900. Though an informant may assert that Managership passed from X to Y before this date, he may be attributing the possession of it to X on *a priori* grounds only, thus giving a false impression of uninterrupted filial (or adelphic) succession.

The succession in Lower Atthiyur shows the office passing temporarily outside the hamlet. In 1946 Chātu died, and the office passed (or would have passed) to his elder son. But the widow left the hamlet to marry a prosperous and childless Kuruma elsewhere. Chatu's sons could have stayed here to inherit their father's land, but preferred to follow their mother, to her new husband's hamlet. Chātu's land was reallotted among his uterine younger brothers. Atthiyūr Kurumas in 1954 still spoke of Chātu's son Molagan as the Manager, but Chāpu has been acting Manager since 1946/7.

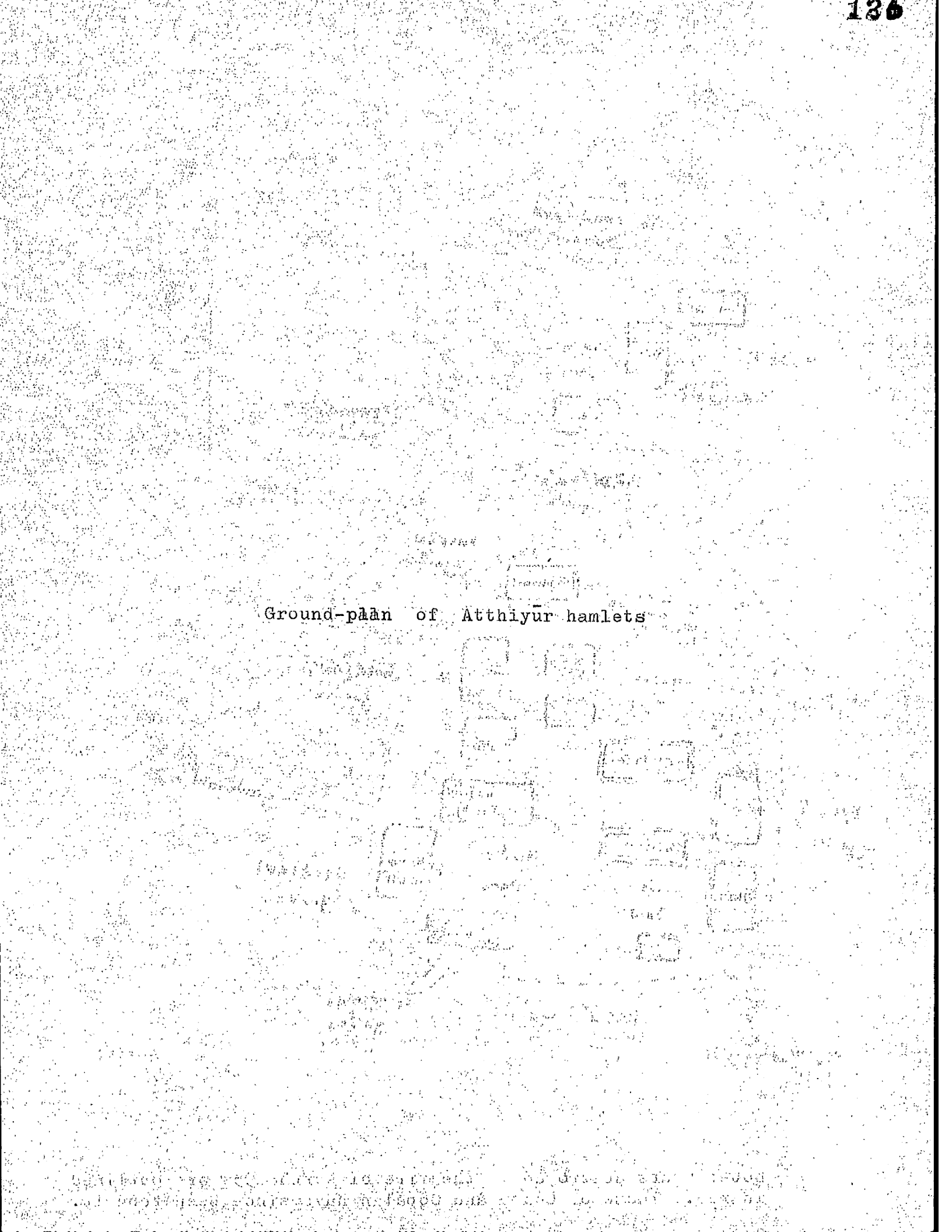
The office was claimed by both the Headman Vullan and by Vulli, the Headman-elect and senior living member of the major segment to which Chātu belonged. Chātu's younger brother Chickanan might have made a claim, but apparently did not, or did not press it. But the Headman had a very bad reputation for mismanaging property, while that of Vulli was not much better; moreover the two were on bad terms, which made the juniors reluctant to risk the enmity of one by supporting the other. Chāpu on the other hand was a senior man of the major segment in which hitherto the office had descended, he remained aloof in the quarrel, held a considerable share of land, and was recognised as both capable and a "fortunate man." The

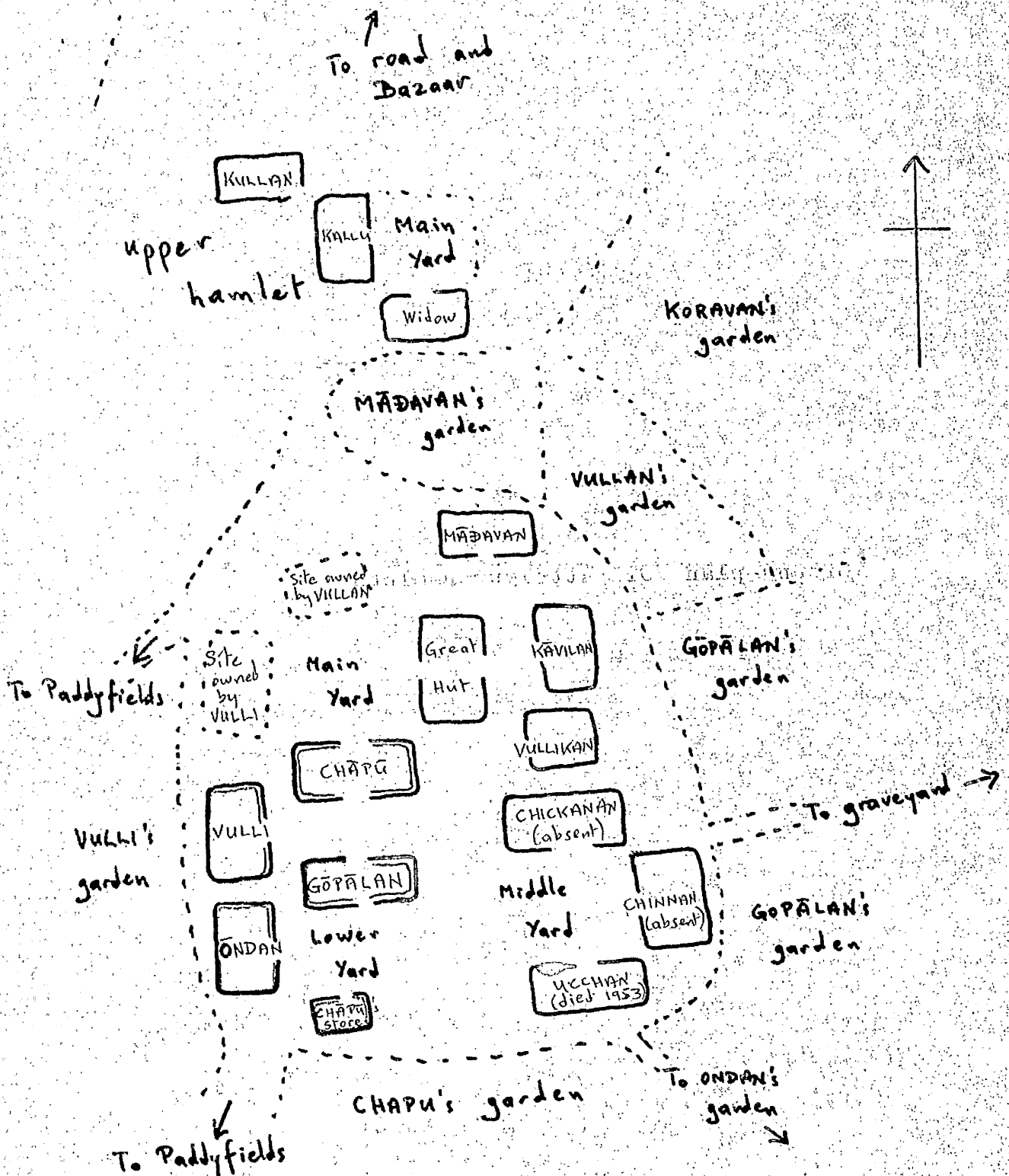
latter quality is deemed important in the somewhat precarious economic activities of the Kurumas, and plays its part in facilitating co-operation between brothers, since it widens the range of possible explanations for differential success and failure.

By general agreement of all the householders, Chāpū was given the acting Managership (kaivasam), and in course of time will be regarded as the unique Manager, his eldest son inheriting the post when he dies. Both Vullan and Vulli acquiesced in this arrangement---had they not done so, Chāpū would probably have refused it----Vullan because his rival did not get it, and Vulli because the office at least came to his uterine younger brother. The pride of the Headman was salved by regarding the choice in terms of individuals, and that of Vulli by looking at it in terms of his [redacted] segment.

The office of Manager is today neither so onerous nor so important as the title may suggest. Indeed in Atthiyūr the Manager no longer manages anything, in consequence of the splitting up of most of the property into individually-held titles. It persists largely of its own momentum, and in response to the value set on "jointness". As a link between hamlet and landlord or Administration the post carries potential power, especially in hamlets where the Headman holds the Managership, but the existence of individual titles to land among the juniors, especially in the Colony area, means that the office is bypassed in many important matters.

Ground-plan of Atthiyūr hamlets





Note: Huts destroyed in the fire of March 1954 are outlined in red. Those of Chapu and Gopalan have since been rebuilt.

In Atthiyūr, the role of Chāpū is to collect the revenue due on the joint section of the garden land, to arbitrate in any dispute over the sharing of this land, and to oversee allocation of the produce of trees growing on it. The joint section does not embrace all the garden of the hamlet, three acres being privately held by individuals. It does not include the garden or hamlet site of Upper Atthiyūr. Trees growing on the joint garden, and in particular Jackfruit and Palmyra trees, are regarded as common property to a greater extent than are crops grown on the same land. A crop such as ginger or edible roots is produced within the year by the sole labour and investment of an individual, and is regarded as his exclusive property, whereas a tree requires little or no tending, and may have been planted long ago by someone else, or have grown from a chance-sown seed. Tree-produce then, is widely shared. When a jack fruit or sago-palm is cut down, the Manager should be told, and permission got from him as well as from the man on whose share of land it was growing. The fruit or sago is shared out among all the households, or all those that request a share. The topmost section of the trunk of a sago palm is traditionally the share allotted to the hamlet Headman, and contains the most delicate and tasty pith.

One reason why jackfruit and sago-palms are distinggished in this way is, perhaps, that their produce was, until recently, of no market value. But since 1947 jack fruits can be sold for a few annas each, while a sago-palm may bring as much as Rs 3. The buyers are usually the poorer immigrants to Wynad. These sums are not

paid to the Manager or to any joint fund but kept by the Kuruma on whose share of garden the tree grew. At most he will make a nominal contribution to the common fund, but usually does not, though it is expected that he will do so.

It was said earlier that the Great hut was the only truly joint property in a hamlet. But all property held by members of the hamlet comes within the common interest; and the sentiment of jointness, itself a product of tradition and of continued patrilocal residence in an exclusive ceremonially corporate group, applies in varying degrees to all this property. The tradition is strongest in land that has longest been held within the hamlet, and particularly in the garden. It is proposed to discuss this in relation to Lower Atthiyūr.

The Atthiyūr garden is made up of about 2½ acres of land distributed as shown in the following table:

Hamlet site	50 cents of an acre.
Vullan (Headman)	10 cents, cultivated by his younger son Appu.
Chāpū (Manager)	80 cents, including the hamlet graveyard, of which part is sown with millets.
Gōpālan	90 cents, including the shares of his dead or absent uterine brothers.
Mādhavan	10 cents.

The total acreage of "joint" garden is therefore 2 acres and 40 cents including the hamlet site, part of which produces pumpkins. In addition there are three acres of garden which are owned or rented by individuals. One acre of this lies elsewhere, and is rented by Chāpū from a Kuruma of the neighbouring hamlet of Upper Nochamvayal, affinally linked to Atthiyūr. The other two acres are contiguous to the Atthiyūr garden. One was owned by Vulli, and inherited on his

death in 1953 by his eldest son Ōndan. The other acre is held by Koravan, and leased by him to a Moplah. Koravan was expelled from the hamlet for incest in about 1950, but managed to retain this property despite the efforts---of the hamlet Headman rather than the Manager---to deprive him of it on the grounds that it is hamlet property, and therefore should not be held by Koravan after his expulsion. These three acres are not administered by the Manager as such but by the individual owners or holders.

The "joint" garden, of about two acres excluding the hamlet site, is divided into seven roughly equal shares of about 25 cents each. Of these, Vullan the Headman shares one with his elder son Mādhavan; and Chāpū and Gōpālan each hold three (in 1954). Those of Chāpū include the shares of Vullikan (who does no cultivation) and Chickanan (who is absent). Those of Gōpālan include the shares of one dead uterine brother (Ucchan) and one absent one (Chinnan). The absent Kurumas, and the sons of those who are dead, retain the right to resume their property, and could do so after applying to the Manager.

Gardens are a major source of food and of cash to their holders; and the extent of garden round a hamlet is a fair index of the energy and prosperity of its ihabitants. The plantain is the main single item of produce. Its fruit are eaten green in curries or raw when ripe, the leaves are used as platters, and leaf, stem, and bud are all employed in ceremonial. A few Kurumas with larger gardens also sell both fruit and leaves, for which there is a demand in Mysore. The plant is an annual, reproducing itself in

four suckers at the base, and these are given away freely on request to neighbours or friends in need of them.

Larger trees grown in the gardens include the toddy and sago palms, mango, and jackfruit. Besides yielding food, these trees also provide timber, firewood, and shelter from sun and wind. Over half of all Kuruma households grow a little coffee, rather fewer grow pepper, and perhaps one in ten or twelve grow ginger. These are partly domestic and partly cash crops, though few Kurumas grow any of them in sufficient quantities for the income to form an important part of the total budget; moreover the plants are of poor quality. Coffee is the main domestic beverage (apart from water), and Kurumas prepare it from the husks of the coffee cherry mixed with a proportion of the beans, thus leaving a larger amount of the beans for sale. These are purchased at fixed prices by local officers of the state coffee board. Minor produce includes pumpkins, chillies, soapnuts, tamarind, and tobacco. A few individuals (those with larger herds of cattle) grow tobacco every year---it needs a soil well enriched with dung---and sell or exchange it with those who do not grow it. The prepared leaf is chewed, not smoked.

The distinction made by Kurumas between "joint" and private gardens appears nowadays in the amount of attention given them. Gardens in the "joint" category tend to be less carefully tended. This is due to the tendency of the of the bad or lazy cultivator to be content with his share in the "joint" garden, while the more energetic (and prosperous) Kuruma expands his holding by acquiring

additional and privately held land. Atthiyūr does not illustrate this well, since the three energetic and successful men, Chāpū, Ōndan, and Gōpālan, have been able to acquire land in the joint sector, and cultivate it well; but the privately-held plots of Chāpū, and that of Ōndan inherited when Vulli died, are equally well tended.

The rich peasant, Veliyan of Upper Nochamvayal, illustrates the point better. He holds one acre in the "joint" sector of his hamlet, which is comparatively neglected, and three acres elsewhere, at a little distance from the hamlet. Part of the three acres consists of an exceptionally rich garden just above Atthiyūr. It is watched by his employee, Vullikan of that hamlet (1). It was purchased for Rs 600 from a Nayar in 1949, and is now estimated to be worth about Rs 3,000. It supplies the owner with a net annual income of between Rs 300 and 500. Another, less productive garden, is watched and tended by Veliyan's Naika employees, who live in it. Veliyan explains his concentration of these two remoter gardens on the lines that his tenure of them is secure, and at his death they will pass to his daughter (he has no son), and her husband if and when she marries. His garden in the joint sector of his hamlet may well be claimed by his classificatory brothers on his death. Meanwhile during his life, though minor theft from the more remote gardens may occur, it is theft over which legal action can readily be taken, or the threat of it made. Produce taken from the "joint" garden will probably have been taken by a kinsman, against whom it would be difficult and embarrassing to take action.

1) Vullikan is his carter.

Beyond the belt of enclosed gardens lies rough pasture, waste, and unfenced fields where small crops of millet and hill-rice are grown. These crops serve to vary the diet, based primarily on paddy, and also bridge the gap in food-supply before the new paddy-crop is ready; since millet grows faster and ripens more quickly than paddy. Ownership of these fields is on individual annual tenures, usually from the Revenue department of the Administration. Their direct food yield is not great, but the tract is of importance in providing each hamlet with space for expansion, for pasture, and for various social activities. Within such "waste" tracts lie the hamlet graveyards and the shrines of minor godlings such as Guligan and Kuti Chāthan; and sometimes of important earth goddesses. In face of extensive immigration, these open tracts are being rapidly filled and enclosed by settlers from coastal Malabar, up to the limits of occupation by Kurumas. When I first visited Nellivayal ridge in autumn 1952, large areas of it were open grassland; but when I left three years later, virtually the entire ridge was settled and enclosed.

The Administration, including the Colony, have only indirectly affected dry land holding in Wynad---indirectly in encouraging immigration---but they have directly forced extensive redistribution of wet land. The policy of both central and State Governments has been to encourage peasant proprietorship, to break up large holdings of wet land, or to give maximum security to tenants. The process is furthest advanced in the Colony area, which includes Nellivayal, though excluding an area adjacent to it. Two acres of paddyland, with

a proportion of dry land, is enough to supply the foodgrains required to support a conjugal family. This change has benefitted the local Kurumas, though the amount of land actually cultivated by them has varied little. This does not apply to a few wealthy Kurumas, who had large private holdings prior to 1947.

Veliyan is one of these. He held 40 acres of paddyland until the Colony acquired it, leaving him with only two acres. Many of these acres were tenanted from him by other Kurumas, who are now either tenants of the Colony or outright owners of their land. Part of the cash compensation receibed was invested by Veliyan in the two gardens mentioned above. This was perhaps influenced by the regional tradition of investment in land, as the prime determinant of status within the limits imposed by caste, but also by the very high world (and local) prices obtaining for most cash crops in the decade following the war.

He also continued to cultivate extra paddyland---6 or 8 acres extra every year until 1955, when the falling price of paddy ceased to make it profitable. Of this extra land, two acres belonged to his carter Atthiyūr Vullikan, and a further two to that Koravan who was expelled from Atthiyūr hamlet for adultery. This land represents their holding as Colonists, and such subletting is, of course, illegal though not uncommon. Koravan in fact had no land until Veliyan intervened---as Member of the District Board---to obtain some for him. It was also Veliyan who enabled Koravan to establish himself in a tiny settlement near Atthiyūr after his expulsion. His motives in doing so seem to have been those of economic self-interest, since Koravan is an energetic worker, and employed by

Veliyan until 1954. It is possible however that other motives affected his decision to support Koravan; one of these was to show his power to ignore a local caste decision, the other to show his influence with the (former) Nayar landlord of Nellivayal (1). His economic interest in the land amounted to crop-sharing; the paddy yielded enabled him to pay (inppaddy) for the labour of Vullikan and Koravan, and also for that of three Naika families who live in one of his gardens and act as his plough-servants. With the drop in paddy prices after 1953, both Kurumas began to demand wages in cash, and have since left Veliyan's service.

At Nellivayal, the Kuruma hamlets lie along the slopes of a long whaleback ridge overlooking a valley of paddyfields---as the name itself suggests (2). Below each hamlet the wet land is identified by the name of that hamlet, and traditionally cultivated by its inhabitants. Below Atthiyūr the stretch of eight acres running down to the stream is known as "Atthiyūr share" (padi), and includes the land formerly allocated to that hamlet by the Nayar landlord Nellivayal Kidāv. Today only a portion of this land is held by men of Atthiyūr, but there is a feeling that all of it should be so held, whereas holdings elsewhere are somewhat less valued. In part this is because they are less convenient of access, but this is not the only reason.

1) The caste decision was the expulsion and outcasting of Koravan. The site Veliyan procured for Koravan to settle on was close by the Nayar Edam site, and owned by the Nayar landlord. Veliyan also supported Koravan in his continued possession of the acre of garden at Atthiyūr.
2) Nelli means the tree Phyllanthus emblica, sacred to Vishnu, whose shrine at Tirunelli in North Wynad is surrounded by them. Vayal means paddyfield.

The traditional "share" of a hamlet contains two items peculiarly felt to be "joint" and of concern to the entire hamlet. One is the well, the other, the Ancestral plot. The well is a shallow pit dug in the paddyland, lined with planks, and fed by seepage. Use of the well is, or is said to be, exclusive to the hamlet owning it, and its maintenance is communal. Well-digging and maintenance are done by the men of the hamlet, but use of the well is a woman's task. It is associated with the hamlet goddess, who is said to be peculiarly concerned with the welfare of the married women of the hamlet. A new bride must visit it ceremonially, guided by her husband's married sister, and bring water from it to the Great hut. If it is polluted it must be baled out by the unmarried girls and young children of the hamlet.

The well suffers pollution when anyone dies in the hamlet, and is baled out as soon as the corpse is taken away for burial. Until it has been emptied, the water may not be used for any purpose. It is also polluted when, as sometimes happens after harvest, a grazing cow or buffalo falls into it. It must be baled out before every occasion on which food is offered to the Ancestors, only the fresh water which seeps in being regarded as ritually pure. In theory even a leaf falling into it pollutes it.

Occasionally adjacent hamlets will share a well. These hamlets are always linked by close kinship ties. Both Atthiyūr hamlets share a well, though it is regarded as the property of the lower hamlet, from which the upper was founded some two generations ago.

Tōtapora and Kālambilau hamlets nearby are inangu hamlets (1), and shared the Kālambilau well until a rupture between them in 1953, when Totapora men dug a new well in the paddyland of the hamlet Manager. The Headman and Manager's families use this well, though the water is less good than that in the Kālambilau well; but two juniors who opposed the rupture continue to use the Kālambilau well as before.

It is felt that a well should be exclusive to the hamlet owning it, and even more so to the caste; use of the well by non-Kurumas of lower caste status, or by non-Hindus, pollutes it. But with the coming of immigrants to Wynad, this exclusiveness has been challenged. A Government "deep well" has been sunk on the crest of the ridge at Nellivayal, but it does not penetrate the water-table deeply enough, and is dry for much of the year. Many of the immigrants on the ridge consequently look to Kuruma wells for their water, including the Atthiyūr well. Kuruma wives in these hamlets are able to earn small sums by carrying water from their wells at an anna a load for the more prosperous immigrant families. Poorer immigrants fetch their own water, and this practice has gained acceptance locally. It is not so everywhere, and cases of assault have been registered against some Kurumas for forcibly resisting attempts by immigrants to use their wells. Such immigrants---Christians or Muslims in the cases known---ignore the association of the well with the hamlet and its gods and Ancestors as a corporation, and disregard the aspect of ritual pollution involved. The Kurumas argue that such immigrants

1) Inangu (rendered enangar by Gough) is a term explained below. Briefly, it means a co-operative association between lineages based on a tradition of intermarriage.

could and should dig their own wells on their own paddyland, as is the tradition in Wynad, and not trespass on the property of others. Traditional possession as well as legal ownership is involved in their claim. Thus in 1953 the Colony allotted the paddyland about the Atthiyūr well to Konambetta Tunchi, a Kuruma on the opposite ridge who is strongly hostile to the Headman of Atthiyūr. Tunchi therefore legally owns the well, or the site of the well, and sometimes boasts that he will fill it in, or otherwise deprive Atthiyūr of access to it; but it continues to be used by Atthiyūr people, and they and the whole neighbourhood continue to regard the well as their own. Tunchi himself never uses it.

The Ancestral plot (porandhiri kandam) is supposed to be the original paddyland cultivated by the hamlet founder, and possession of it should descend adelphically from Headman to Headman. The rice grown upon it is supposed to be peculiarly acceptable in food-offerings to the Ancestors, and the ears of paddy hung in the Great hut at the first-fruits ceremony (Puthiri) should be taken from it. In fact we find that the plot is usually held by the Headman only in hamlets recently founded. In most hamlets, the system of filial inheritance has separated possession from Headmanship, though at any time the possessor may, through his adelphic seniority, succeed to the Headmanship. This periodic coincidence of possession and office perhaps keeps alive the tradition, and certainly strong tensions tend to surround the possession of this particular piece of land.

In Lower Nochamvayal a junior member of the patrigroup has inherited the plot from his father. The Headman has not objected to

this, but the junior has ambitions to cut a prominent figure in the hamlet and Locality assemblies, and justifies this in terms of his possession of the plot. He asserts that this possession makes the Ancestral spirits favour his ambitions. In Lower Atthiyūr the Headman holds the plot, but its possession has become a bone of contention between him and the Headman elect, Vulli. The Headman intends to transmit the plot to his younger son, but Vulli claims that he himself should occupy it when he becomes Headman. This dispute is discussed in the following section.

The Ancestral plot is not the only paddyland to which the Kurumas attach special value. Certain Nayar-created offices exist in the caste which carry with them rent-free enjoyment of specific holdings of paddyland; usually small holdings of one or two acres only. Possession of these continues to pass adelphically, with the office. Succession to the office and land tends to be restricted within a single hamlet, but as recently as about 1944 at Nellivayal such an office and its attached land passed from one hamlet to another within the patrilaterally linked association of the Four Taravāds, from Nochamvayal to Kālambilau. The Colony has since taken over this land, and part has been reallotted to a non-Kuruma Colonist, despite Kuruma protests. One acre remains with the office holder, but as a Colony allocation irrespective of his office. It is registered in his name, and will presumably pass to his sons instead of the next office-holder; but this particular situation may tend to stabilise that office in Kālambilau hamlet, the office now going with the land instead of vice-versa. Lower Nochamvayal nearby also holds Nayar-given land in respect of a different office.

In Lower Atthiyūr most of the land is held from the Colony, potentially as freehold, two acres of paddyland being allotted to each grown man. None of them have so far (1955) paid for this land, or any part of its value, to the Colony, and the Colony accepts no rent, as this might create an awkward precedent (1). The holders pay only the land tax. This land, which lies below the hamlet, includes much of the traditional "Atthiyūr share", and also the Ancestral plot, of about two acres (2). Until the Colony came in 1948, this "was enjoyed by whoever was Headman. He paid the tax on it in cash, and also a rental of 1 podi of paddy a year (3) to the Nellivayal Nayar." Part of the paddyland held lies on the opposite side of the ridge, in North Valley, and this has not yet been acquired by the Colony.

A survey made in June 1953 shows that, on paper, 11 cultivators share 24 acres of paddyland between them, which corresponds closely with the Colony ideal of 2 acres to a family. But only 18 of the 24 acres are Colony land, the remainder, 6½ acres in North valley, being held freehold or on lease from the Nellivayal Nayar. The details of land held and worked are shown in the table below. Five of the holders have sublet their land---illegally, where Colony land is concerned---much of it to persons outside the hamlet, and two members of the hamlet have no paddyland (Kāvilan and Appu). Two of the five are absentees who have settled elsewhere, and acquired fresh

1) The situation as of 1954-5. The Colony annually threatens dispossession, but has not yet carried out its threat.
2) "Rendu pāli kandam", two rows of diked fields stretching from ridge to stream in mid-valley, making 20 fields (kandam) in all.
3) A podi is a measure by volume, weighing 110 to 120 lbs according to variety. In 1953 a podi of paddy sold for about Rs 15.

land there; Chinnan and Chickanan. During the year two more men, Ucchanx and Vulli, were unable to cultivate their land, and died before the harvest. As a result of these deaths, by the end of the year three major landholders had emerged: Gōpālan with 6½ acres, Chāpū with 6, and Ōndan with 4. These three were the only fully efficient cultivators in the hamlet, and were prosperous enough to pay the Colony the freehold sum, though none of them did so.

Lower Atthiyūr paddyland holdings in June 1953.

Vullan	2 acres	Colony land, sublet to a Nayar immigrant for Rs 50.
Vulli	2 "	Colony land, of which Vulli cultivated one himself and sublet the other to a Christian immigrant for Rs 25 for the year. Vulli also held--
	2 "	freehold in North valley, leased to Chapū for 5 podis of paddy a year.
Kāvilan	-	Allotted 2 acres by the Colony in 1948, he resigned them to his junior Chinnan, and works as a herdsman for a local Moplah.
Vullikan	2 "	Colony land, which are cultivated by his employer Nochamvayal Veliyan.
Chāpū	2 "	Colony land, self-cultivated.
	2 "	freehold in North valley, where he also leases and cultivates Vulli's 2 acres there. These 4 acres in North valley were inherited by Chāpū and Vulli from their father Kōman.
Chickanan	2.5 "	in North valley, leased from Nellivayal Nayar at an annual rent of 2½ podis paddy. Chickanan left the hamlet in May 1953, handing this land over to Ucchan.
Chinnan	2 "	Colony land, sublet to an immigrant since Chinnan left the hamlet in 1952.
Mādhavan	2 "	Colony land, sublet annually to various immigrants at 5 podis paddy a year.
Ucchan	2 "	Colony land, cultivated in part by himself. He took over Chickanan's land (q.v.) in 1953, and sublet it to a local Moplah for 6 podis paddy. When Ucchan died in September 1953, both plots passed to Gōpālan.
Gōpālan	2 "	Colony land, self-cultivated; inherited 4½ from Ucchan in September 1953.
Ōndan	2 "	Colony land.

The table gives a total of 24.5 acres held under 11 names. A twelfth individual, Vullan's younger son Appu, was at this time living elsewhere and working as a hired labourer. He returned to Atthiyūr at the end of the year to marry (his third marriage, the two previous unions having speedily broken up), and took over his father's land in return for maintenance, Vullan being a blind widower. It is remarkable that in only one instance is land sublet within the hamlet---from Vulli to Chāpū---or in two if Ucchan's brief possession of Chickanan's land be counted. As against this, six parcels of land were sublet outside the hamlet to local immigrants.

Atthiyūr is an extreme example of depopulation and external subletting, among Kuruma hamlets. Even so, the appearance of the Colony has exaggerated the impression of economic breakdown by its random and indiscriminate allocation of land. The hamlet today holds 5 or 6 acres of paddyland more than it did in 1948. The Colony, on the one hand setting an upper limit of 2 acres per cultivator, and on the other wishing to ensure that autochthones like the Kurumas do not lose their land to immigrants, has penalised the abler cultivator while benefitting those unable or unwilling to work the land. An adjustment has taken place with concentrations of land in the hands of the three abler men since 1948, but these concentrations are themselves liable to be broken up by the Colony.

Save for Vulli and Chāpū, who inherited 4 acres of freehold paddy-land from their father, all the Atthiyūr cultivators prior to 1948 were tenants of the Nayar landlord, paying him an annual rent (pātam)

in kind. When the Colony was established here, every Kuruma applied for an allocation of land, and they were encouraged to do so by Nochamvayal Veliyan, then a newly elected member of the Malabar District Board, who countersigned their applications. His role as backer and guarantor extended his influence; his position in the District electoral political system made him a patron with many clients, most of them of his own caste and neighbourhood. The securing of land for the landless also served his material interests, since he himself had lost a good deal of land to the Colony, but was now able to make surreptitious use, in crop-sharing and other ways, of the Colony paddyland allocated to formerly landless Kurumas. At various times since 1948 he has cultivated or shared in the paddyland of Atthiyūr Vullan, Vullikan, and Koravan---the latter was expelled from the hamlet for incest about 1950, but Veliyan has continued to make use of his paddyland.

The object of the Colony is to create peasant proprietors, not tenants; and periodically Colony inspectors visit Atthiyūr demanding payment of the freehold sum (janmam) in cash; at fixed rates of about Rs 80 per acre. Failure to pay may mean ejection, and in most hamlets payment was completed by 1953 or 1954, the money being borrowed partly within each hamlet, and partly from shopkeepers and expropriated landowners like Veliyan. But payment was everywhere slow, the Kurumas being aware of Government reluctance to proceed to the extremity of ejection. The Atthiyūr people still assert that the Government would not "dare" to eject them in favour of "foreign immigrants", and none of them have yet paid anything. The attitude of the less successful and

of the formerly landless (✕) is, that they are traditionally tenants of the Nayar landlord, and are now prepared to be tenants of the Colony, but they cannot raise the freehold sum demanded of them.

In 1948 paddyland was still ample for the needs of the local population, and a proportion of it continued to be left fallow each year---a tradition of paddy cultivation in Wynad. But immigration has resulted in increasing pressure on the land, and therefore on the Colony from immigrants, who see autochthones either failing to till their land, or doing so inefficiently. "It would be quite right to take land away from these Kurumas; they grow only 4 or 5 podis on land from which we could raise 20 podis!" Most immigrants are no more efficient cultivators than are Kurumas, but a proportion of them are experimenting with intensive modes of cultivation; whereas no Kuruma at Nellivayal has yet used artificial manures, and only one has tried to raise a double crop of paddy.

In Atthiyūr three distinct questions arise: why have so many families left the hamlet? Why do so many residents hold land yet fail to cultivate it? And why do these individuals lease their land outside the hamlet and outside the caste in so many cases? There are many reasons underlying these related facts. One of them, extreme disunity in the hamlet, is discussed at length in the following section. The coming of the Colony has obviously strengthened individual possession of land, and weakened co-operation and adelphic inheritance. When Chickanan left the hamlet he tried to sublet his paddyland to a Kuruma of another hamlet, and only with great difficulty was his brother Ucchan able to insist that it be left with him, according to caste custom. The outsider would have paid an agreed rent,

whereas Ucchan would probably not have done so, or have paid a smaller amount on account of their siblinghood. Atthiyūr is also traditionally a poor hamlet, with few cattle, and gardens that produce little in the way of cash crops. Lack of the means to work the land already held, and factional conflict within the hamlet have combined to force Chinnan, Chickanan, and Ucchan to leave it. Mobility between hamlets is not an unusual feature, but it is unusual for so high a proportion of the inhabitants to leave in so short a period of time without any corresponding immigration into the hamlet. All three emigrant families established, or tried to establish themselves, in the hamlets of their affines.

These reasons may be peculiar to Atthiyūr, but they have their general application. Paddy-cultivation is important for domestic consumption, but after the fallx in prices of 1952-3, and the abolition of rationing, paddy ceased to be a major cash crop. For this reason we find that Nochamvayal Veliyan steadily reduced the extent of his surreptitious holdings, and invested in gardens and bazaar property. Conversion of paddy to cash involves a loss, and few Kurumas have paddy to sell when the price is at its best (1). Atthiyūr produces little in the way of cash crops, and to obtain cash many preferred to hire out their labour and their land. Some claimed that it was more profitable to do so, and in certain circumstances this may have been true.

1) In January 1952 paddy sold for about Rs 20 per podi in the local bazaars. In 1953 this fell to Rs 14, and to Rs 10 in 1954. In 1955 it declined to Rs 8, but later began to rise again to Rs 12. There is also a seasonal curve, prices being lowest after the harvest (November-February) and highest during the monsoon. Few Kurumas are ready to sell until January or February.

It is true insofar as Kuruma crop yields tend to be low, and of poor quality. And as co-operation between kinsmen declines, so the field of monetisation widens and strengthens. If a man has no cattle of his own to plough his land, no kinsman may be able or willing to lend him any; he must then hire a pair. The seasonal hire of a pair of bullocks may reach a third of the total harvest from two acres of paddyland, and the tendency is, to demand the sum in cash rather than in paddy, apart from the cost of maintaining the animals. This cost again increases as co-operation within a hamlet declines. Land tax must be paid in cash, and where land is rented, the rental likewise tends to be in cash. The Colony demands its freehold payments be made in cash. Brideprice was paid in paddy or labour up to twenty years ago (1935), but today it is invariably in cash, the amount tending to rise steadily. In 1953 it averaged about Rs 100 for a virgin marriage. The conversion of produce to cash is nearly always done through a non-Kuruma agency; very often a Muslim merchant or shopkeeper, and sometimes through an immigrant Christian or Hindu. The State has also begun to enter this field, monopolising the local coffee trade and encouraging sales through local Co-operatives (1). No Kuruma is a professional trader, though one or two have begun to invest in shops and Co-operatives. Veliyan of Nochamvayal owns one shop locally, but does not manage it.

1) Locally known as P.C.C., the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operatives. Paddy rationing, which ended in 1952, was organised through these. Members (i.e. share-holders) can use their services to get cash loans against growing crops, and also to market the crop. Control of these co-operatives lies with local Boards dominated by immigrants with capital and by Chetty and Nayar landowners. Virtually no Kuruma (save Veliyan, and a few like him) are members.

The traditional Kuruma ideal of hamlet economy was a quasi-joint corporation in which the land was held by the Headman-Manager and worked by his juniors. This system still exists in many small hamlets inhabited by (say) a father and his sons; but in most hamlets today, and particularly in the very large ones, only the garden-nucleus is so held. The bulk of the land consists of two or three large holdings in the name of senior members of the hamlet, the Manager usually being one. These holdings corresponded roughly with major or minor segments within the patrigroup; and were themselves subdivided into plots allocated among the juniors. Normally a man was first allocated land by his father (or mother's husband) soon after his marriage, but this did not amount to partition (where the land was owned) or to the creation of separate tenancies (where it was rented). Partition normally took place on the father's death, but not always even then. In Upper Atthiyūr the three brothers continued in a joint economy for some years after their father died. Partition occurred in 1948, and was precipitated by the coming of the Colony which, in that year, took over the hamlet land, formerly Nayar-owned.

In Lower Atthiyūr the Headman Vullan holds two acres of paddyland from the Colony; but he is old and blind, incapable of tilling that land. It is the duty of all his juniors, but particularly of his two sons to till his land and maintain him from the proceeds; but his elder son Mathavan now holds land from the Colony too, instead of from the local Nayar landlord through his father, and is reluctant to support Vullan unaided. He claims that others, especially Appu*, should

*Vullan's younger son.

assist him in this; or alternatively that he should himself take over Vullan's own Colony holding. Vullan prefers to retain this, to rent it out for cash, which he needs to satisfy his taste for teashops, bidis, and liquor; and giving a portion of its income to Mādhavan in return for irregular maintenance. His younger son has chosen to leave the hamlet altogether to work for hire, though he returned in 1954 in order to remarry, thereafter helping to maintain his father, and cultivating his land.

A number of younger men abandon cultivation in this way, with the idea of making a small capital as a labourer, and then returning. This capital may be used for development of the land, for buying or hiring cattle, or for brideprice. Appu was absent from the hamlet for two years, and made sufficient money to be able to remarry (at a correspondingly lower brideprice) and to buy seed-paddy and hire a pair of plough-cattle. But this temporary desertion of the land nowadays involves the risk that a brother or an immigrant will take and keep his land. Land may be still plentiful in Wynad as a whole, but it is no longer plentiful in the more accessible tracts such as Nellivayal.

As with the possession of land, labour is ceasing to be co-operative, or co-operation is restricted to very small family groups. Fraternal co-operation remains an ideal, especially between uterine brothers, but the competitive aspect of brotherhood coupled with the changes in hamlet economy rarely permit them to work for another after both are married. Marriage implies separate residence, and access to a share of the family land. It also requires brideprice and family co-operation, so that a son or younger brother

cannot assert his independence before it has taken place. These needs drew Atthiyūr Appū back to the lower hamlet, and also the youngest brother Ucchan to the upper hamlet; he returned there to marry in 1954, after living elsewhere for a period.

Division of labour between the sexes in a hamlet is mainly though not exclusively limited to the domestic family. Husband and wife together form the basic team in domestic activities, the separation of these being controlled by mild taboos, by custom and training. Women do the work of the house, prepare food, and replant the paddy. Men till and sow the fields, carry and thresh the crop. Both sexes together cut the harvest, and may take turns in minding the cattle, though this is done chiefly by young lads or very old women. Women alone may milk cattle, and men alone may use the labour of cattle. Hunting is exclusively a male activity, and fishing very largely a female activity (1), but these are essentially co-operative pursuits at hamlet or even wider levels. More will be said on hunting in the chapter on Locality institutions.

The tradition of communal agricultural labour within a hamlet persists but is hardly ever practised. But affinal and cognatic kinsmen, usually within the same neighbourhood, still sometimes combine their labours. When a man is unable or unwilling to cultivate his land himself, he may request help from these kinsmen, inviting them to come to his hamlet for work on a specific day. If ploughing is the proposed task, they will bring their own

1) Women fish in groups of five to twenty or more with wicker winnowing baskets, used like scoops. They usually dam a stream with earth beforehand. Men fish occasionally, using throwing-nets or scoop-nets, made domestically.

teams and ploughs; and working together will complete the task in a single day. The host joins in if he is able, and is expected to offer his own labour in return at any future occasion. He must also supply his guests with a hearty mid-day meal, liquor, and coffee. This institution was used by Atthiyūr Kallu in 1953 and 1954 after his brothers had separated from him, and his quoted remark "ten men will come and help me if I ask them" was in reference to it. To help with threshing, a pair of affines often co-operate, two men and four or five cattle being an adequate team for this operation. But most Kurumas rely on the labour of the domestic family alone, save in crises, while the few who can afford it prefer to hire their labour from the lower castes rather than appeal to kinsmen or neighbours.

Perhaps 5% of all Kuruma cultivators regularly employ Paniya or Naika field labour, and a somewhat larger proportion occasionally do so. The regular labour is hired by the year, with an initial cash payment at Ucchār (February), and two or three more subsequently. Sometimes paddy is still given instead of cash, but labourers are often reluctant to accept it. During the year the labourer is fed and may also be accomodated by his employer. Most long-established hamlets claim to have had one or more families of serfs attached to their lands in the past, and there is no reason to doubt that this was so. In a few cases the descendants of these serfs still maintain ceremonial contact with the hamlet formerly employing them, though at Nellivayal nearly all such labour is now employed by immigrants. Kurumas also employ the services of Hindu blacksmiths and carpenters, for a season as well as upon contingency. The smith hired for a

season is fed and accomodated by the individual Kuruma hiring him; he works for that Kuruma, and also sells his labour to anyone in the neighbourhood requiring it. During 1953 a Hindu carpenter, goldsmith, and blacksmith were all resident in various Kuruma hamlets at (1) Nellivayal.

Kurumas also sell their own labour, usually outside the caste, and to persons or organisations whose status (caste or otherwise) is not felt to be lower than their own, or not significantly lower. Thus a Kuruma will work for a Muslim, though he may assert that Muslims are polluting, and of "lower status" than Kurumas, because he recognises that their economic status is high---there is no shame in doing so; whereas it would be thought shameful to become the employee of a wealthy Cheruma immigrant, or Paniya, supposing such to exist. In fact the correlation between traditional caste status and present wealth is still reasonably close in Wynad. There is certainly no wealthy Paniya in Wynad, and possibly no wealthy Cheruma, though some of the latter are establishing themselves as prosperous peasant immigrants.

Few Kurumas are whole-time labourers, but many do occasional work, preferably for cash wages. This employment is seasonal, and occurs especially at time of harvest and of paddy-replanting. Women provide as much of this outside labour as the men, especially in replanting, and in pounding paddy or coffee. Regular labour is limited to men, and is usually that of cattle-herding. Atthiyūr Kāvilan and Nochamvayal

1) The carpenter in Lower Nochamvayal, the blacksmith in Mokatta, the goldsmith (who was not fed but merely accomodated) in Lower Atthiyur. The first two were young bahhelors, the latter an old widower.

Elimban were both employed permanently as herdsmen by local Muslims, while Atthiyūr Vullikan was carter and general assistant to Veliyan of Nochamvayal.

The external sale of labour has affected social control within the Kuruma hamlet and caste, and further redueed not only the authority of seniors over juniors but of husbands over wives and brothers over sisters, insofar as women now go out to work. Atthiyūr Ōndan, like other men, expressed feelings of resentment about this and its consequences:

"Our women now go out to work, because wages are high (1), and neglect our own fields in consequence! Such a thing also lowers our caste status---these Colonists come for our women just as if we were Paniyas! Before the war they might earn a few annas for occasional labour, but now they get paid one rupee a day, or five seers of paddy; and they all prefer to take the cash, because they need not contribute it to the household!"

Before the war Kuruma women prepared rice from paddy supplied by local landowners, especially the Chetties, but this was done within the hamlet and on a hamlet basis. The Headman acted as agent, linking the landowner with his own juniors. These, led by the Headman, collected the paddy and took it home for their wives to parboil and pound. This system is now defunct, and such labour as the women perform is done outside the hamlet, outside the control of the Headman, and to some extent outside the control even of the husband. A woman may sell her labour without her husband's permission, and regards her wages as her own private property, particularly if

1) In 1953-4 wages on time-rate were Rs 1---4 to Rs 1--8 for a man and As 12 to Re 1 for a woman. In the immediate post-war years almost double these rates were paid.

they are in cash, not paddy. Wages in paddy are hard to keep separate from the conjugal stock, whereas cash can readily be hidden or invested in ornaments of gold or silver. A woman's ornaments are her own exclusive property, on which her husband has no claim. But now that women go out to work, some have begun to keep separate even paddy from the domestic store by 'banking' it with their employer. In the months before Atthiyūr Ucchan died (1), his wife hoarded up paddy in this way as an insurance against his death. Had it been kept in the hamlet, his heir Gōpālan would have seized it. As it was, he attempted to claim it.

I have tried to do three things in this section: to describe Kuruma economy as I saw it; to show how the Kurumas see it, with their emphasis on co-operation in the hamlet, conceived as ideally a joint corporation; and to supply ethnographic detail, drawn from Atthiyūr, the hamlet by which I lived, and of which more will be said in the following section. There is no body of historical material on Kuruma economic organisation, but it seems probable that hamlets as fully joint corporations did not exist in the past any more than today, save for a brief period of their existence; and that partition took place, if not on the death of the founder, at least at some time in the following generation. But this partition was not necessarily total, and some sectors of the hamlet economy continued joint. Land redistribution under the Colony, monetisation of the economy, and extensive immigration of the more advanced Plains dwellers have all helped to weaken internal co-operation and interdependence. But

1) Ucchan of the Lower hamlet.

the hamlet is proving a highly resistant unit to change.

III iii: The hamlet as a corporate ritual unit.

The Great hut of a hamlet has already been described as the only truly joint item of property within it. An expansion of this statement will now lead into a general consideration of the hamlet as a corporate ritual unit. In ritual terms the Great hut (valiyapera), or Fat hut (taddeyanpera) as it is sometimes called, is the only hut in a hamlet; all the other huts are described, in relation to it, as "corners" ~~(kxxxx)~~ (kodi). It is normally claimed to be the original hut of the founder, or built on the same site. It is the dwelling place of the Ancestor spirits of all deceased members of the hamlet, and also of the House gods, or gods of the hamlet. The gods are associated with the entire building, and with particular parts of it----roof, pillars, fireplace. The spirits are thought to live in the loft of the hut, which is used for storage and for drying parboiled paddy. Rats and other small creatures sometimes raid the loft and provide occasional noises which, in certain circumstances, suggest supernatural presences.

Building and maintenance of the Great hut is a joint responsibility on all the members of the hamlet, including absentees and exterior members. It is controlled by the Headman, who may live in it himself, or allocate it to a junior member. No stranger, and particularly no non-Kuruma may live in it (1). It is customary for

1) One of the scandals of the Thirty-Six Locality at Nellivayal is the hamlet of Tānipera at Māroth, of two huts only. In 1950 the Headman transferred the whole property to a Christian immigrant in settlement of a debt. The Christian now lives in the Great hut and the Headman has been ostacised by the Locality.

each newly-married couple in the hamlet to live in it for a time after marriage. In practice a Headman rarely lives in the Great hut, and no-one lives in it for long, as it is constantly being used for ceremonies. On the other hand there is a feeling against leaving it unoccupied, as ceremonial objects are stored there, and the Ancestors "like the smoke of the cooking-fire."

As the genealogically seniormost man of the hamlet, the Headman is the priest of the Ancestors. He alone may pray openly to them, and make food-offerings in the Great hut. These offerings are made periodically, at the three or four major festivals; and also contingently, as after a funeral, or when hunters from the hamlet kill a deer or wild pig. Such offerings are a copporate undertaking, requiring the Headman's permission and co-operation. Towards the periodic offerings, every family in the hamlet must contibute food and labour; but for a funeral, or when a special vow has been taken, the individual or family most closely concerned provides the food and any other expense involved.

A separate offering is set on the Great hut floor for each Ancestor spirit. Two or three rows of leaf-plates are set out in line with the roof-tree, while a separate offering for the founder (and his uterine brother, if any) is put at the head of the line. In lower Atthiyūr both Kolumban and Chandran are distinguished in this way. A founder's offering may be further distinguished by being set on a metal or china plate, or extra-large leaf. The

offerings to notable men, or to those dying inauspicious deaths may also be distinguished in certain ways; as by being set apart from the rest, or accompanied by a particular dish or drink which the man is known to have liked.

The setting out of the plates is done in private by the Headman, who then invites the men and women of the hamlet in turn to take and eat the food on a particular plate or plates. The Founder's offering is always eaten by the Headman himself, and that of his successor by the Headman-elect. The Headman has the power to expel individual Ancestors from the collectivity (pēna-kūtam) if he believes their spirits are inimical to the remainder. This is done by throwing out their particular leaf-plates from the Small door of the Great hut (1), and not setting it at all in subsequent offerings. Similarly he inducts the spirits of the newly dead to the cult, by setting out a new leaf-plate for them at the offering which concludes their funeral ceremonies. By the process of expulsion the Ancestral spirit (pēna) becomes a malignant spirit (kothi) which must wander about the neighbourhood but cannot enter the hamlet from which it was expelled. A disgruntled junior will sometimes attempt to make use of one of these malignant beings against his enemies.

The number of offerings made in a hamlet at any one ceremony varies in relation to a number of factors, one of which is, of course, the depth of that particular patrilineage. Other factors include the relative importance of the occasion on which an offering is made,

1) A Great hut has two doors, which I call the Great and Small doors; their significance is explained below.

and the enmities of a particular Headman. Thus upper Atthiyūr hamlet normally offer to seven ghosts, beginning with Mannu as their founder (1), while the lower hamlet offer to twenty-five, excluding Mannu and his descendants. This total does not include every individual who died a member of the hamlet and was buried in its graveyard, but those whom the Headman remembers and favours. It is said to be made up of six Headmen and their wives, six elders who never became Headmen, and their wives; and also the dead second wife of the present Headman, Vullan. Even so, this total is offered in full only at the Ucchār festival, and at the ghost-induction ceremony that follows a death. On other occasions, the number of offerings made in the hamlet is reduced to a dozen or fifteen (2).

As priest of the House-gods, the Headman conducts seances, at which one or more of these gods possesses a Kuruma medium. He leads an interrogation of the medium in which questions are put to the god, divine permission taken for such matters as the arranging of a marriage with a particular hamlet, and questions put on misfortunes of any kind involving members of the hamlet. Every seance is a corporate hamlet activity, and never private or sectional. All

1) See the genealogy given in the preceeding section, or the fuller one given at the end of the thesis.

2) The smaller number of offerings would include those set for the founders and deceased Headmen and their wives, and any other individual especially favoured by the Headman, such as his own father. It would exclude those who never held the Headmanship. This selective aspect of the Ancestor cult reflects the principles of hamlet organisation, in which the gods, and their priest the Headman, can confer, confirm, or withdraw membership of the group, within limits. And, apart from the founder, the memory of individuals fades rapidly as the generations pass.

grown male residents of the hamlet form the congregation; to them may be added males of the patrigroup who have chosen to live elsewhere but have not ceremonially separated themmelves from it. Occasionally male affines and neighbours may attend, but they cannot directly address the god. Women of the hamlet, whether wives or sisters should keep away from the Great hut, preferably indoors with their children. They may often be seen on their verandahs trying to catch what is said by the god, though this renders them liable to rebuke by their menfolk. However, a sick woman or child may be brought into the god's presence for treatment. In a very few hamlets the founding Ancestors are also consulted in this manner through human mediums.

As the Ancestors are offered cooked food, so the gods are offered money or certain traditional ornaments; and again the offerings are either periodic or contingent. At every Ucchār festival, which marks the ending of harvest operations, a Kuruma medium is engaged by each hamlet to personate its House-gods. These are consulted in the Great hut by the assembled congregation. The Headman utters a prayer for prosperity, the god answers it favourably, and each man then offers the god a silver coin----eight annas or a rupee is the customary amount. After the seance, the Headman collects this money and places it in the sacred cash-box, of which he is the custodian. During the past year individuals may have vowed the gods money or ornaments contingently on receiving some divine favour or benefit. These vows must be fulfilled at the Ucchār seance, if the benefit is deemed to have been obtained.

For instance, a man may injure his arm, and find that recovery is slow. To obtain relief he may vow a small sum (say one rupee) to a particular god at the next seance, or even ask the Headman to hold a seance specially for his own condition. In the latter event he will be expected to find the medium's fee: a rupee and a meal, preferably with a drink of arrack. At this seance the vowed money is presented to the god, who accepts it and promises recovery. The coin is then stitched into a cloth which is bound about the injured limb, and kept there until recovery is made. At the next Ucchār this coin will be given to the god along with the man's normal contribution at Ucchār, the whole going into the sacred cash-box. When the misfortune is unusually serious, ornaments may be promised instead of money. The customary offering to a major male deity is a gold bangle; to a minor one a gold ring; and to a goddess a gold locket (tāli) or a red cloth of silk. Kurumas liken the fondness of the gods for money or for precious ornaments to the attraction nectar has for bees. The idea of binding a vowed coin to an injured limb is, they say, to ensure that the gods will be attracted to the injury and so heal it. Similarly perhaps, the cashebox should be kept in the loft of the Great hut, tied to a particular longitudinal beam just under the roof-tree. This ensures that the gods never desert the Great hut.

The contents of the cash-box are joint property, with the Headman as custodian and administrator. They may be spent, by common consent, on any corporate enterprise such as repair of the Great hut, or the purchase of new ornaments for the gods. Members of the congegation may also take loans from it, against the security of

ornaments, or even of promissory notes. As the Headman is custodian, his favour is important in such matters. He himself has free access to the box, though he is supposed to inform the congregation if he takes money out, and to repay it in full. An unscrupulous Headman sometimes dies leaving the box full of his own promissory notes but empty of cash; the obligation to honour these notes then passes to his heir or heirs. Abuse by the Headman is restricted by the fact that the whole congregation acts as unofficial auditor, notably at Ucchār when the Headman must wash the box and its contents ceremonially. Though they have no direct access to it, every man knows to within a few rupees what his hamlet cash-box contains. When Kolēri, the Headman of Upper Nochamvayal hamlet, died in 1953, the congregation empowered his uterine younger brother and successor Chickanan to draw out Rs 45 to meet the funeral expenses. Normally money used for such a purpose would have to be repaid, but as the borrower was the new Headman, the congregation agreed to regard this sum as a gift, calculated to please their new priest. It formed just under one quarter of the total sum in the cash-box; about fifteen pounds sterling. Much criticism was later levelled at Chickanan on the grounds that he had spent little of this money on the funeral, but concealed it to buy tea and other luxuries for personal consumption.

I have described the cash-box as "sacred." It must be kept in a state of ritual purity, and handled by the Headman only when he is himself ritually pure. This state of purity is maintained by the washing ceremony at Ucchār. The most sacred and important part of the contents are the coins contributed by the founders of the hamlet at

their first seance there. These coins are called the "origin" or "original offering" (kīle), and are kept separate from the rest. They may not be borrowed or spent. Usually they consist of the pure silver rupee coins issued in Queen Victoria's time, or of the small native gold coins (fanam) issued by the Rajas down to the end of the eighteenth century. These coins, long withdrawn from circulation, are still employed by the Kurumas in ceremonial, and form part of a girl's brideprice; retaining as such their traditional value of four annas.

The term kīle, it may be remembered, was also used of the original holding of paddyland in a hamlet. Of both coins and paddyland, Kurumas say: "It is the root from which all else has grown. Without the root (kīle), the rest would die and disappear. So long as the root is sound, the rest will flourish!"

In a sense the contents of the box represent the history of the hamlet. Each hamlet has allegiances to political groupings within the caste. When these allegiances are shifted, the break with the past may be signified by starting a new and separate cash-box, or by disposing of all the contents of the old one save for the "original offering."

Such breaks are not too uncommon, and one occurred at Nellivayal in 1953 in the hamlet of Tōtapora there. This hamlet had long been attached to the Thirty Six Locality, and had a special connection with Lower Nochamvayal, the hamlet providing the Locality Headman. Tōtapora provided this Headman with his Adviser (mandhri) and with

one of the Locality mediums. The two hamlets were inangu to each other. Before 1950 these relations were severed as the result of a quarrel, and the Headman of Totapora, one Kēlan, transferred his allegiance (and that of the hamlet) to another group, called the Seven hamlets. Two senior men of Totapora, one of them an absentee, dissociated themselves from this policy and continued to be friendly towards Nochamvayal. When Kēlan forced the second senior man to leave the hamlet, he found help and temporary shelter in Nochamvayal.

When Kēlan died in 1953 he was succeeded as hamlet Headman by the senior absentee, who at once reversed Kēlan's policy and returned to the traditional allegiances of the hamlet. The money found in the cash-box, only Rs 25, was almost all spent upon the funeral, in the form of a loan made to Kēlan's elder son. The remainder was disposed of by the new Headman, save for the "original offering." He disposed of it, he said, by spending it in the local teashops save only for one four-anna piece. This coin he threw away in the hamlet gardens, an act symbolic of throwing away the entire contents of the cash-box, and so breaking with Kēlan's policy. The "original offering" formed the nucleus of a new cash-box which was to receive its first addition at the following Ucchār ceremony.

In the adjacent hamlet of West Thodūti, the Headman was allegedly keeping all contributions collected under his dispensation separate from the sum inherited from his predecessor, with whom he had been on bad terms. It was asserted that his intention in doing so was to put pressure on the House-gods to kill the sons of his

predecessor, or at least to injure them. Only when his private prayers to this effect were answered would he add the newly-collected coins to the old cash-box---or so his supporters told me. His position as priest of the hamlet gods enabled him to make these prayers secretly, and to manipulate the cash holding in such a way as to give greater effect to these prayers without committing any breach of custom that might unite the entire congregation against him. Yet even this is sometimes attempted: a Headman may close up the Great hut and refuse to conduct seances, offer prayers, or collect cash offerings. A Headman going to such extremes either gets his way very quickly, or unites the congregation against himself, and becomes liable to expulsion and replacement.

The normal term for a cash-box is the word for treasure (bhandāram), but in ceremonial language several terms exist, describing cash-boxes of different ritual status. The simplest and lowest-ranking type of bash-box is merely an unbleached white cotton cloth knotted about the contents; and hence called simply "knotted cloth" (tūniketthe, or kaccha kōndala). Kōndala is also the ceremonial term for a human medium, though in normal Malayalam it means the corner of a piece of cloth which has been knotted about some object---possibly money. In this metaphor the cloth represents the medium, and the money the god possessing him. When a new hamlet is founded, this type of cash-box is the first to be instituted. Its use may continue indefinitely, depending on the feelings of the elders and the nature of the House-gods. Thus, the god Kāli mala is said to be "very mild, and quite content with such

a cash-box."

The most common type of cash-box is a wicker basket (perla) woven by Urālis. Where several gods share the same basket (as is usual), the funds of cash and ornaments presented to each are sometimes kept separate in cloth wrappings. A third type of cash-box, and that of highest status, is a carved wooden bottle known as a "tied vessel" (ketthamkuti). I have never seen one of these, but they are described as resembling a peacock in shape, and sometimes are ornamented with peacock feathers (1). Such vessels are made by Hindu carpenters, and have apparently been taken over from Thiyyar or Nayar practise. They are found in North rather than South Wynad, and are held by only a few long-established hamlets. In such containers, only the "original offering" is kept; the remaining cash, together with the vessel itself, as stored in a wicker basket. In the hamlets of Locality Headmen, the knife emblematic of his office is also kept in this basket.

The cash-box also provides a link with the Nayar landlord. This is indicated in the following text, which was taken from one of those elders of Tōtapora hamlet (mentioned above) who maintained their allegiance to Lower Nochamvayal and the Thirty Six Locality after their hamlet Headman Kēlan had broken with it. This informant, the Locality medium Murugan, said:

> "Every established hamlet has its cash-box (kīle), but properly speaking, only the landlord and his god can establish a box. In this neighbourhood only three hamlets can claim such a box: the two Nochamvayals, and Lower Atthiyūr; and of these only Lower Nochamvayal has a true "tied vessel", since it is the

1) The peacock is associated with the Sanskritic god Subramaniam.

"hamlet of the Locality Headman. Anciently, Pudhupādi hamlet (1) also had one, but they surrendered it to their landlord when they migrated here. They came here to Nellivayal, and paid the landlord 120 fanams (= Rs 30, or £2---6) as the price of their office as Locality Headmen. The landlord returned to them 16 fanams, which sum became their "original offering." These coins are still in the cash-box.

"Later on, the Kuruma whom we call Velangalam Nālupādi came here (from North Wynad), and was allowed to live in Lower Nochamvayal. He brought with him the cash-box and "original offering" from his own hamlet (Vengūr); but since this was "tied" to the god Pākā dēvam of his natal hamlet, that god followed him here; and there was trouble between that god and our own god Kandam Puli. To end this conflict, the landlord was asked to intervene, and in his presence the immigrant's cash-box was buried at kūtekāvu (2). Thus the god was kept outside, and suppressed.

"My own Tōtapora forebears came from Māndakolli, but left behind them their "original offering", as was proper. When we came here, a new cash-box was established. But when Kēlan died last year, we threw it away, because of his sinful policies. Now we have established a new one, in the form of a knotted cloth. In time this may be replaced by a basket. When we have a little money to spare, we offer it to our god, who accepts it saying "Be united in fellowship, be humble in conduct!"

"Koliyādi hamlet (3) buried their "original offering" at Dēvarakolli outside the hamlet, and their landlord only recently gave them Locality office and a new "original offering." Thus,

1) A hamlet now extinct in North Wynad, on the land of the once important and powerful family of Pudhādi Nambiyar.

2) The burial place of some members of the family of the Nayar landlord at Nellivayal, Nellivayal Kidāv.

3) That of a nearby Kuruma Locality Headman, established in office by Kollivayal Nambiyar. Dēvarakolli (= god's valley) is a slight depression outside the hamlet where the settlers established three goddesses who had "followed" them in their migration.

"their status is inferior to that of Lower Nochamvayal, even though they are Locality Heads. Like us (Nochamvayal), they still propitiate and fear these immigrant gods, and keep them outside the hamlet.

"In Lower Nochamvayal there is still some minor conflict between the gods. The clan-god (kula-dēvam) there is Pūdhādi dēvam (1); and he came in with the mat, following them all the way from Pudhupādi like a hunter following the spoor and blood-trail of his quarry. Having rights in the patrigroup (āl-avakāsam) he cannot be set aside, as the god of the former landlord can be, even though he came here uninvited. But our present landlord's god is Kandam Puli, and he has rights over the soil and the whole Locality (kunn'avakāsam)."

This text incidentally raises questions about the nature and roles of Kuruma deities which cannot be discussed immediately, though something is said of them on the following page. It also shows that an "original offering" may connect a hamlet with the Nayar landlord as well as representing internal relations between Kuruma settlers and their gods. Hamlets with such a Nayar connection claim a status superior to that of others, though control or leadership of a group of hamlets (Locality) does not necessarily follow from this. Lower Atthiyūr (which lies closer than any other hamlet to the landlord's house and temple) has never led a Locality, or claimed to have done so; but its inhabitants boast of the Nayar connection, and their right (or duty) to perform menial services for the landlord's house. Lower Nochamvayal and Koliyādi hamlets each control Kuruma

1) I have rendered the informant's term kula-dēvam as "clan-god" with some hesitation. Comment must be postponed until the matriclans are discussed in chapter IV. The god Pūdhādi qua Kuruma godling is associated with Pākā dēvam, whose sister's son he is said to be. The Nochamvayal settlers left Pākā dēvam behind; the Nālupādi's arrival threatened to bring him in as rival to Kandam Puli.

Localities in virtue of this Nayar connection. Their Headman compete for precedence, and one basis of the Nochamvayal claim to higher prestige within the caste is that its Nayar connection antedates that of Koliyādi. Another claim is that the Nellivayal Nayar family ranks above that of Koliyādi (Kidāv as against Nambiyar), and therefore the one Kuruma Headman outranks the other! The present Headman of Atthiyūr, Vullan, broke with the association called the Seven hamlets: and publicly justified a temporary assumption of independence within the caste on the grounds that lower Atthiyūr had a Nayar connection.

The Ancestor cult, emphasising commensality, is sharply distinguished from that of the House gods (1), which have specialised roles, and in whose name decisions are reached concerning ascription to, or exclusion from, hamlet membership. Every hamlet has at least two gods, and some five or six, but the commonest number is three; two male and one female. This is so in Totapora, both Nochamvayals and all hamlets claiming to have branched off from them, and in a majority of the other hamlets of the Locality. Atthiyūr is atypical in that both hamlets have only two: the male god Kandam Puli, "given us by the Nayar landlord", and a goddess Bhagavadi. The female is usually the least important deity, "seen" last in a seance, or sometimes not at all, and rarely the vehicle for important pronouncements. She is associated with the wives of male members of the hamlet; and ceremonially with the Great hut fireplace and cooking-pots, and the hamlet well.

1) I exclude from the term minor godlings (dēvata) such as Guligan, who live outside the hamlet in gardens, byres, and storehuts.

Occasionally the goddess assumes great prominence, and "grows troublesome" as Kurumas put it. She may inflict death by smallpox or by a fall from a toddy-producing tree, and she may multiply herself in the form of younger sisters or daughters. Such a goddess is identified with the Hindu Malayil Karengāli, and is expelled (with her offspring) from the hamlet and established in a shrine (often a storehut) beyond the inner or outer fence. Here her cult may dwindle almost to oblivion, or it may take a new form and grow in importance. This is so at Mukūl hamlet, Nellivayal, where the Headman propitiates and consults her. The local Kurumas, and even lower-caste Hindu immigrants, consult her through the Headman and his medium, and seek her favour with offerings of money, liquor, and blood-sacrifice. The Headman of adjacent Mākutti, established by the elder brother of the Mukūl Founder, envies Mukūl possession of this goddess and her shrine, and is attempting to attract her away by secret offerings. The possession of such a goddess increases the standing of a hamlet, and her cult may attract devotees from a considerable distance. Karengāli as a House goddess must show herself consistently mild. In most hamlets, the goddess is held to be the quiet and peaceable Mānyani (turmeric) Bhagavadi, as in Atthiyūr.

Of the male deities, usually two in number, one is the dominant god and the other his subordinate. The former is associated with territory, with the soil; and is connected either with the landlord (Nayar or other) or with the caste Locality, or with both. The hamlet Headman is priest to all the House-gods, but is associated

primarily with the dominant god, while the Headman-elect is associated with the subordinate god. In the Great hutkkm the dominant god is associated with the front or Great door, and with the three timber pillars supporting the ceiling on that side. This door is cut in the long wall facing the Great courtyard. The subordinate god is associated with the door in the opposite wall, known as the Small door (1), and with the three pillars on that side.

During a seance in the Great hut the congregation of male members of the hamlet form a semicircle stretching from door to door, and facing the fireplace, which is usually at one end of the hut. The Headman stands at the right of the congregation by the Great door, and the Headman elect at the other end, by the Small door. The Kuruma medium operates in the space between congregation and fireplace. If the dominant god is to possess him, he must first touch the central pillar by the Great door, then that by the Small door, and finally the fireplace. The subordinate god begins with the Small door, and the goddess with the fireplace. If women or children are brought into a seance, they must stand apart, near the fireplace, until the Headman presents them to the god.

Each door is approached from the outside by steps cut through the wide verandah of the hut. Four steps should lead to the Great door, and three to the Small door. This difference is regarded as an index of status of the two goods, and also of individuals in relation to the hamlet and its cults. A corpse taken for burial, or an individual

1) Cheruwādhal, literally "small doorway"; the Great door(way) is the peruwādhal, and the fireplace of the goddess is the "three stones cooking place", or mūne kal'aduppe.

leaving the hamlet permanently, such as a widow and her children, do so from the Great hut by descending the four steps from the Great door. A bride entering the hamlet in marriage ceremonially enters the Great hut through the Great door; a daughter leaving it to marry elsewhere, and so only partially relinquishing membership, does so from the Small door. Marriage is often referred to periphrastically in terms of the steps associated with each door. To "do four steps up" means to bring in a bride; to "do three steps down" means to give a girl in marriage. Kuruma exegesis makes the obvious points that a married woman has a higher status in her conjugal hamlet (entered by climbing four steps) than in her natal hamlet (left by descending three steps); and that the difference of one step marks an overall rise in her status in passing from the unmarried to the married state. To leave ceremonially by the Small door marks a break but not a total break with the hamlet. The bride remains a member of the patrigroup , and may resume residence if widowed or divorced.

The birth of sons into a hamlet is associated with the dominant god; and in ceremonial language these sons, or all the male junior members of the patrigroup or hamlet, are termed "children of the Great door". This term embraces all male members of the patrigroup whether resident in the hamlet or not, or whether born in the hamlet or not, and usually exterior members also. It excludes any occasional resident even one of long standing, while he retains membership of another hamlet and patrigroup. Conversely females of the patrigroup (but not the wives) are called "children of the Small door." Every child

conceived and born in the hamlet is thought to have been conceived by the blessing of the appropriate god. At and after marriage, they are offered prayers for children, and the custom of making a newly married couple live for a time in the Great Hut is thought to ensure fecundity. A man may be born elsewhere, and acquire membership of his patrigroup only at maturity, but he too becomes a child of the appropriate god by adoption.

More than mere fecundity is sought of the gods. They are asked to bless each married couple with a balanced family of children of either sex. Prayers to this end are recited by the Headman, and a particular husband may vow money or ornaments to one or the other god to secure a child of the desired sex. The ideal family is one of five sons and five daughters, of which the firstborn is a son, the second a daughter, and so on alternately. Such alternation or balance of the sexes is called oppemēcham. In practice it is considered satisfactory if a family includes at least one child of each sex, but where all are of one sex, and especially if all are girls, then an explanation may be sought in terms of sin and supernatural intervention.

Thus, in upper Atthiyūr, Kallu's wife has borne seven children; of which the first three, all males, died young. Four girls born subsequently have all survived. This is a constant grief to both parents, aggravated by the birth of a son to Kallu's younger brother. Kallu, the Headman, broods on possible causal offences, makes vows to get a son, and even accuses the god of cheating him. He has also

induced his wife to cohabit secretly with a number of his friends, fearing his own temporary sterility may be ~~no~~ blame.

The desire for this sequence and alternation of children represents not merely the need of the hamlet or the total caste to draw on equal numbers of both sexes to recruit its ranks, but also the economic needs of the parents. Wives are procured in exchange for bridewealth. For a virgin girl this now amounts to Rs 100 or more, apart from the cost of the marriage celebrations. Bridewealth is payable in cash by the groom's father or elder brother---always the former, provided he is still alive. The other members of the patrilineage make no financial contribution. If we suppose that three sons are born to a man in the first decade of his married life, then a corresponding expense will fall upon their father when they reach marriageable age, without any compensating return of brideprice for daughters given in marriage. In the ideal system, a daughter is born a year after the first son. Fifteen years later, they will marry on the same day; the girl at 15 and the boy at 16. The two brideprices thereby cancel each other out, leaving only the expense of the wedding feast to be met.

A father desires sons for the economic assistance they bring him; which in theory counterbalances the expense of marrying them. They also represent security in old age and after death, for it is the duty of the sons to see that their father's ghost is installed among the Ancestor spirits in the Great hut. However, Kuruma proverbs state that a man always prefers sons to daughters, since they bring him money at marriage, they do not quarrel over his property, and they look after him more kindly in his old age than

a son's wife would do (1). Conversely, women are said to prefer sons. Until a woman has borne a son, her position in her conjugal hamlet is insecure; she cannot hold property there, but her son may do so. Without a son she may, as widow, find refuge in her natal hamlet, with a married sister or daughter, or in leviratic marriage to her husband's younger brother.

The idea of children alternating by sex is one aspect of the general Kuruma conception of order. A condition of this order, and of general social euphoria, is the subordination of the minor male deity to the major, dominant god. Kurumas liken the relation between the two to that between the village Headman (Adhigāri) and his servant (S'ipai). The former sits in his office issuing orders, the latter moves round the village executing them, and obediently returns for fresh orders. (2). In hunting, for example, the Headman first prays to the dominant god for a kill, then despatches his juniors in a body to the jungle. If the prayer is accepted, the subordinate god is supposed to accompany the hunters, to bring them and their quarry together, and to guide the fatal arrow into its flank.

The opposed notions of order and disorder are expressed in forms of the words kīle and mēle, lower and upper. The term kīle we have have already encountered in connection with the sacred cash box and the ancestral paddy-plot of a hamlet. It means lower, or down, but connotes original, customary, or traditional. Mēle, or mēlvāram means upper, later, novel, non-customary. All behaviour sanctioned by custom is said to be "lower", and any innovation or contravention of

1) Normally a man lives where his sons lives, paying brief visits to his married daughters once or twice a year, when he is very kindly treated; but an extended stay would be strongly resisted.

2) This metaphor is also jestingly applied to conjugal relations: The wife is the Adhigāri, the husband is her servant.

custom is described as "upper". Disobedience to elders, and sexual misconduct are sinful and mēlvaram: the wearing of Western style dress and cropped hair is "upper" or "new conduct", mēle mariyādhe, and also sinful, or at least open to rebuke.

Any act stigmatised as novel or sinful is thought to be liable to proliferate, to produce other similar and perhaps graver acts. There is a constant tendency, in fact, for disorder to become dominant. In such circumstances the subordinate god is thought to run footloose, out of the control of the dominant god. His dominance is both lost as a result of misdeeds by members of the congregation, and also is the consequence of those and subsequent misdeeds. Simultaneously there is disorder among the gods, and disunity among the congregation. Order can then be restored only by the united prayers of the Headman, and the offerings of his juniors to the dominant god. The latter is thereby enabled or persuaded to regain his dominance, and to reassert control over the subordinate god just as the Headman has over his juniors.

Statements to this effect have been heard many times from Kuruma elders. This notion of a divinely sanctioned natural order is linked up with what has already been said about the role of the House-gods in procreation and the recruitment of personnel to the patrigroup, the role of affines and matrikin, and the organisation of the hamlet itself. In the previous section it was argued that the Great hut was perhaps the sole fully joint item of property in a hamlet. With its associated emblems and supernatural beings it is also the focus of hamlet unity; its gods and Ancestor spirits

give the hamlet an identity in place and time. Moreover the gods, through a personal revelation that interprets custom and marries it to the decisions reached by the Headman in congregation (1), make or confirm decisions about recruitment: whether a proposed marriage can be ceremonially confirmed, a junior born elsewhere accepted into full membership, or shelter and exterior membership given to a kinsman or stranger.

Yet the group is inherently unstable, being based on residence rather than descent. Though real and fictional descent are attributed within the patrigroup and are largely stabilised for each individual when he first marries, and brings his bride into the Great hut, they do not become finally fixed until the individual dies, and his ghost is brought in as an Ancestor! The Headman is the individual closest to this status, and this reinforces his authority as priest of the Great hut. He may identify himself with the dominant god, and refer to all the junior members as his "tenants." There may thus be dyadic relations within the hamlet between Headman and juniors, the latter representing the congregation led by the Headman-elect; or the internal structuring in another context may be that of generations and segments. These are complementary. Both are threatened, or felt to be threatened, by the matrilineal principle; the connection with the mother's brother in another hamlet, with the dispersed matrigroup, and the wider matriclan, in terms of membership of which all man are of equal status, in contrast with the ordering of the patrigroup, and hamlet.

1) The congregation of grown male members of the hamlet forms a council, with the Headman as spokesman: but within limits the Headman can also speak for the gods.

The dominant god is the god of the Great door, associated with male children and those incoming brides whose fertility, or whose children already born, will ensure the continuance of the local group. The subordinate god (1) is associated with female children, who leave the hamlet at marriage, and through whom (rather than the male children of the hamlet) matrigroups and matriclans can alone recruit new members. The Headman has a special association with the dominant god, whom he addresses as "Father", and the juniors with the subordinate god, whom the Headman calls "Elder brother." (2 This appears consistent with the organisation of the patrigroup as we have described it.

But the gods have a further aspect. In most hamlets the House-gods are said to have a kinship relation to each other, whose nature suggests the latent matrilineal principle. In Atthiyur the two gods are thought to be brother and sister; in hamlets with a trio of gods, the dominant god is usually brother to the goddess and maternal uncle to the subordinate god. This ascribed relationship does not necessarily contradict that implied in the Headman's form of address; for among the Kurumas there is no invariable kinship term for the maternal uncle's son: "he is a sort of brother" say the Kurumas. This uncertainty of status is reflected in the behaviour ascribed to the subordinate god of a hamlet.

1) In Atthiyūr the sole male god Kandam Puli is said to "hold both doors", and combine the roles of both male gods; but disorder and rebellion among the juniors are "explained" in terms of activity by Kuruma ghosts not housed in the Great hut, or expelled thence.

2) All juniors address either male god as "Lord" (Tambai, or Tambura-n). The hamlet goddess is addressed as "Mother" (Amma).

The subordinate god is said to be less a god (dēvam) than a spirit (kothi). A kothi can be any spirit of the jungle and open country, but it is also the term used by Kurumas to refer to a human spirit which has been expelled from, or has not been inducted to, the Ancestor cult in the Great hut. Some informants further elaborated the apparent contradiction between the status of god and spirit, by saying that the subordinate god is a deity during the period from midnight to noonday, and a kothi from noon to midnight. This may be connected with the custom that a seance should always take place, or at least have commenced, before noon on any particular day. In fact seances sometimes begin as late as 2 or 3 p.m., but it is most unusual for them to be held after that time; and 11 a.m. is the commonest time for a seance to open. On the other hand sorcery and Cursing by individuals are practised after noon, and particularly after darkness has fallen.

Cursing is a major Kuruma institution, practised in private but not necessarily in secrecy. The assistance of a diviner is essential to the individual who wishes to curse another person or a group of persons. Divination (kodi) is a semi-professional occupation, like that of mediumship. Every elder has some skill at it, but not all have the gift of it. The services of recognised diviners may be hired, or they may be offered freely to a kinsman or neighbour. No man, however expert, can divine on his own account, as he would be sure to cheat himself; at least in any serious matter, such as invoking a curse. Consequently cursing, however discreet the diviner and his client may be, can never be

completely secret, though the object and method used may be unknnown.

Cursing usually occurs within a hamlet, within a patrigroup, or between neighbours. When a known diviner repeatedly visits a man during the evening in his hut, neighbours at once suspect them, and listen intently to their muttered conversation. Friends discuss the matter privately, and gossip soon warns the threatened individual of his danger, which he tries to counteract, by prayers or counter-curses. Cursing may endanger third parties, and is socially disapproved. No man will admit that he is engaged in cursing another, although it may be common knowledge that he is doing so.

The role of the diviner is to identify the presence in the neigubourhood of an active kothi, and to bring his client in touch with it. It is thought to be the spirit of a particular individual roaming about the environs of the hamlet from which it has been expelled. Though its identity may be known, it is referred to not by name, but by the name of the matriclan to which it belonged in this life. The object of getting into touch with it is to bring it inside the hamlet, and direct its malignancy against the individual to be injured.

Persons employing curses invariably regard themselves as having been wronged in some way. Through the divingning board this wrong is presented and argued, somewhat as a barrister may argue the case for his client. This presentment of the wrong is called a nyāyam, which has the primary meaning of an argument, a judgment, or a case at law. Kurumas also use it as a synonym for kothi; thus, to "raise a nyāyam" means both to present a case or to raise a malignant spirit. Through

divination it is possible to get into contact not only with evil spirits, but also with the hamlet gods, thus bypassing the Headman. The man wishing to invoke a curse will secretly present his case to the dominant god, and urge him to withdraw his protection from the accused, thereby laying him open to the attacks of the evil spirit which the diviner has identified and contacted.

Recourse to cursing within a hamlet implies disunity among its members, loss of control by the Headman, and loss of control by the dominant god, who is unable or unwilling to prevent the evil spirit from entering the hamlet precincts. Restoration of order can only be secured by a ceremonial demonstration of unity (ōrumā) by the entire congregation. This unity is broken when even a single individual stands aloof, though disunity is rarely admitted to the outsider. A medium will not act in an acutely divided hamlet, since he would then be possessed by the malignant spirit instead of the god. The first question he puts to a Headman is to ask whether the congregation is united or not; and the Headman replies: "Yes, we are united", or "We are united so far as I am aware."

Once the evil spirit has crossed the hamlet boundaries and entered the compound, it is believed to merge with the subordinate god, which then leaves the control of the dominant god. In consequence misfortune and even death are liable to strike the inhabitants. Ideall-y, the person accused by the man directing the curse ought to be the first to be injured, but this is not necessarily so; the entry of the evil spirit implies a loss of order in the hamlet, and because order is lost, suffering not only ensues, but ensues at random, in the

sense that innocent and guilty suffer alike. Vulnerability then becomes a function of genealogical seniority; the least vulnerable individual is the Headman, who is in closest contact with the dominant god; the most vulnerable is the youngest infant in the hamlet. The curser is himself in danger, but he endeavours to protect himself and to exercise control by repeating his argument through the divination board, and by secretly vowing money to the dominant god. Persons invoking a curse within their own hamlet are usually genealogically senior members of it.

A curse may be invoked on some minor occasion, and speedily forgotten; but where the practise is long continued and the result of deep animosity, it tends to divide the hamlet into factions and to affect all hamlet activities until one or both parties to the curse are dead; or until one party gives up the contest and leaves the hamlet. The survivors, or the remainder, may then reunite as a congregation and give ceremonial expression to the restoration of order by consulting the gods through a medium and making them offerings of the customary ornaments. Until this is done, disorder must continue as before; that is to say, the hamlet remains in a state of social tension during which the most trivial misfortunes are interpreted as being due to supernatural intervention.

The most common axis of conflict within a hamlet involving extended invocation of the supernatural is between two senior men of different segments of the patrigroup ; and typically between the Headman and another man of the same generation but another segment ----the Headman-elect or another. It is rare for the Headman and

Headman-elect to conflict seriously when they are uterine brothers, or have a common grandfather. Similarly it is rare for a curse to be directed upwards across a generation. A situation of conflict existed in the hamlet of Atthiyūr during the period of fieldwork, and to this we shall now turn.

The main figures in this dispute were the Headman and Headman-elect of lower Atthiyūr, Vullan and Vulli. It was fought out between them with intense personal acrimony, while the other members of the hamlet, having failed to reconcile them, attempted to remain aloof. It is not easy to say exactly what the dispute was about. Vulli claimed that it was over land, the possession of the Ancestral paddy-plot, but this appears to have been a side issue. Vullan held this plot of 2 acres from the Colony; and indicated that, when he died, it would pass to his younger son Appu. Vulli claimed that it should pass to him when he became Headman, since the Headman of the hamlet traditionally held this plot as tenant of Nellivayal Nayar. Since the Colony took the land over in 1948 this claim could not be taken very seriously, but Vulli made it, and by custom there was justice in his claim. But the heart of the dispute lay in claims to status, in conflict between the roles of Headman and Headman-elect. As Headman, Vullan wished to maximise the area of his authority and reduce that of the Headman-elect; whereas Vulli was not prepared to be a passenger. This situation was aggravated by the fact that Vullan was a widower, whereas Vulli's wife was ambitious for herself and her husband.

In every hamlet the senior wife, who is normally the Headman's wife, plays an important role. She has no formal office, but is sometimes referred to as the female Headman, or Woman who Can (pōranōl). She keeps an eye on the conduct of the junior wives of the hamlet; she may teach them, or criticise their behaviour; and organises the preparation for every ceremony at hamlet level. In Atthiyūr, since the Headman was a widower, Vulli's wife played this role, and at first Vullan made no objection. But then, one day, Vullan's uterine sister died in the hamlet while visiting it, and was buried there. Before her funeral ceremonies were completed the wife of Chāpū gave birth to a child. Faced with this double crisis, Vulli's wife turned her attentions from the dead to the newly-born in a way that Vullan deemed insulting to his sister and himself. He berated her, declared that there was no such office as female Headman, or that if there were, he alone could appoint someone to it, and that it would certainly not be her! Vulli's account of this quarrel shows that he himself was included in the Headman's disapproval; he reported Vullan as having said:- "He who does not observe my sister's mortuary rites shall not enter the Great hut!"

After a period of insulting exchanges, Vulli and his wife absented themselves from all ceremonies conducted by Vullan, and ceased to perform the duties of Headman-elect and of female Headman respectively. This occurred about 1950. However, Vulli failed to mobilise sufficient support among the juniors either to force Vullan to an apology, or to expel him from office. Neither his

uterine brother Chāpū, nor his grown son Ōndan (by his deceased first wife) joined him in his isolation. It is possible that Chāpū's assumption of the office of Manager about this time had something to do with it, but the exact circumstances of that assumption cannot now be disentangled. During the period when observation was possible, from late 1952 onwards, Vulli received active support only from one man, Vullikan. Vullikan was of the same major segment of the patrigroup as Vullan, but had been born elsewhere, and acquired membership as the result of his mother's marriage to Atthiyūr Chandu. He inherited little property from Chandu, and had no paddyland until he became a Colonist in 1948. However, he was able in argument, and a skilled diviner; through his divination Vulli began to direct curses against Vullan.

According to Vullan, two curses were used against him by Vulli; and this was confirmed by experts from other hamlets. One was directed from within Atthiyūr, and the other from his wife's hamlet. In Atthiyūr he secretly vowed money to the dominant god to induce him to withdraw his protection from Vullan. His "argument" to the god embraced all Vullan's misdeeds as Headman, not merely offences against Vulli himself. Thus Vullan's intention of handing on the Ancestral plot filially instead of adelphically assumed importance as a debating point.

Having tried to withdraw divine protection from Vullan, Vulli then sought supernatural agencies of punishment. One such is said to have been the subordinate god of his second wife's hamlet. Such a god is concerned with the well-being of the women who marry out of his hamlet, and with that of their children. Vulli could not approach

this god directly, but indirectly through his wife's brothers. Such a course of action is unusual, but special circumstances attended it. Vulli's current wife was from the hamlet of Kotūr, the Headman of which is one of the four principal caste Headmen; and the gods of which are supposed to be proportionately powerful. More than this, Atthiyūr is traditionally a member of the association of hamlets called the Seven hamlets. The leader of this association was a client of the Kotūr caste Headman. About 1948 Vullan had quarrelled with the leaders of the Seven hamlets, and had withdrawn from the association. Vulli, seeking support, turned both to Kotur and to the Seven, promising that when he became Hamlet Headman in succession to Vullan, he would rejoin the Seven.

The other curse said to have been employed against Vullan was the use of the ghost (kothi) of Vullan's father's father's sister. This woman was of the same matriclan as both Vullan and Vulli. She had died in Atthiyūr and was buried there, but for some reason her ghost had never been inducted to the Ancestor cult. From informants outside Atthiyūr it was discovered that this houseless ghost was thought to be still active, and causing misfortune within the patrilineage. Vulli endeavoured to employ it against Vullan, the grandson of the Headman (Kuppan) who had failed to induct it.

Vullan himself argued that he had done no wrong against Vulli, or abused his office of Headman, and that therefore these curses could not injure him, but must recoil upon the head of their invoker. But he was not content passively to await this expected recoiling. He argued publicly that Vulli's self-imposed isolation from hamlet

affairs must injure the hamlet as a whole. He tried to separate Vulli from his wife by singling her out as a trouble-maker. And he tried to employ the ghost of a recently deceased member of the patrigroup against Vulli himself. Just as Vulli employed a ghost from Vullan's segment of the group, so that used by Vullan was of Vulli's segment. It was the ghost of Kēsavan, who died in February 1953 in his wife's hamlet, where he had moved towards the end of 1952. He had moved there in the hope of evading the sickness and misfortune that had been oppressing him in Atthiyūr, for which he suspected a supernatural origin.

Immediately after he died, his corpse was carried to Atthiyūr and buried in the ancestral graveyard according to custom. During the funeral ceremonies it was discovered that a pot and some metal plates taken by him from Atthiyūr had been left in his wife's hamlet. These were not his private property, but part of the as yet undivided property of his father's father Atthiyūr Indan, and so should be returned to Atthiyūr. Vulli's conjugal hamlet of Kōtūr lay near that of Kēsavan, and Vulli was therefore asked to recover the property on his next visit to Kōtūr. He did so, but as a mark of gratitude for the help given to Kesavan, he left one of the plates with Kēsavan's widow's brother as a gift. Vullan learned of this, and seized upon it as a pretext to condemn Vulli for wrongful disposal of unpartitioned property. He declared he could not induct Kesavan's ghost into the Great hut until the plate was returned.

Kesavan had no land in Atthiyūr and no close kinsman. His half-brother Koravan had recently been expelled for incest. Of his father's brothers sons, Chickanan and Chinnan were absentees, and

Ucchan was intermittently absent, being in poor health, and going about seeking a cure. Of all these sons, only the youngest, Gōpālan, remained in Atthiyūr; and apart from him, Vulli was Kēsavan's closest male kinsman. Vulli's pride naturally made him refuse Vullan's request to reclaim his gift, so Kēsavan's ghost remained "in the water" (1), and was used by Vullan against Vulli. In the legalistic way in which Kurumas argue amongst each other and with their gods, this spirit could be said to have a legitimate grudge against Vulli. The latter was technically wrong in disposing of the plate as he had, and Vullan was therefore technically within his rights in refusing to induct Kēsavan's ghost to the Ancestor spirits.

In his search for support within the hamlet, Vulli naturally turned to his uterine younger brother Chāpū, and to Gōpālan. The former refused to commit himself either way. Over the Kēsavan affair, Gōpālan took Vulli's side, but later in the year he withdrew his support, and even transferred it to Vullan. This came about in consequence of another death, that of the ailing Ucchan. Since two of the three surviving uterine brothers were absentees, Gōpālan took over all Ucchan's land, including two acres of good paddyland in North valley, outside the Colony limits. Vulli thought that he had some claim on this land, but Vullan strongly supported Gōpālan's claim to the entire property. Chāpū, as before, continued to refuse to commit himself.

1) During the time between death and induction, a man's ghost is held to live in the nearby stream, whence the women bring it at a ceremonial fishing to be joined to the Ancestor spirits.

Face to face relations between Vullan and Vulli were monotonously acrimonious, and neither tried to conceal that he wished for the death of the other, though denying recourse to cursing or to sorcery to bring this about. Vullan was over 60, and Vulli about 50 years old, and neither man enjoyed robust health. The state of his own health, and that of his opponent, was attributed by each man to be consequent upon the fluctuating success of their mutual conflict. For some years Vullan had been losing his eyesight through cataract, while in late 1952 Vulli fractured his leg in falling from a tree. Each sufferer advanced supernatural explanations for this; each came to me for treatment of these and other conditions; and each assured me, with an air of fatalism: "Before the next monsoon, either he or I must die."

Evans-Pritchard's description of the role of witchcraft in explaining the particularity of misfortune proved helpful in enabling me to follow the course of this contest in cursing. Each contestant tended to advance a supernatural explanation for misfortunes suffered by the other man, and by members of his major segment of the patrigroup, but tended to offer a naturalistic explanation for his own, while not excluding the supernatural altogether. Thus Ōndan's small son Rāghavan fell ill, and Vullan attributed this to the rebound of his father's father's curse. He accused Vulli of it:-

"Was not Raghavan's illness due to the defeat of a kothi you would have put upon me?"

"If I did such a thing, may the punishment (= death) befall me!"

"Death would be a happy release for you---you must suffer, first!"

Vulli then went on:

"Once you told me to leave the hamlet, so I have kept aloof from

affairs, as you know. Recently (July 1953) you invited everyone but me to the marriage of (your son) Appū, calling even my son Ōndan to the feast by name; but me you did not call, so I did not come."
"Then why did you eat the food?"
"It was brought to my hut by Ōndan, so we ate it."
"You are Headman-elect, and stand behind me; you should have appealed to the god at the first seance after I had told you to go away, and asked him what was proper to be done."
"I did not know enough to do so, so I held my peace."
"Well, what am I to do about that? You send your wife home to her natal hamlet, and we will look after you here. If you refuse to do this, you will always be ailing, and some day you will die. If you do not, then I myself must die."

Not very long after this encounter, Vulli declined into a dropsical condition (nīre, or "water"; medically, ascites). He left the hamlet for a time, to live in Kotūr, but his condition became worse, and he carried home by bullock cart to die in his own hut in November 1953. As his death approached, discussion of supernatural causes stopped, or became so secret that nothing could be learned of it. In particular, Vulli's son Ōndan became emphatic that the death was a natural one, the normal funeral proceedure was followed, and Vullan inducted his ghost to the Great hut. He had won his victory. The epitaph, spoken by Ōndan at the graveside, was: "See what a good man he was to have delayed his death until the harvest, so that we would have paddy enough for the funeral!"

The death produced a facade of unity in the hamlet, but this did not endure, and within ~~khm~~ a year Vullikan, now the third Headman (i.e. next but one in succession to Vullan as Headman) emerged as a new opponent. Vullikan had acted as diviner for Vulli, but after

the latter died, he made submission to the Headman. Vullan had objected to his open support for Vulli, and had put pressure on him by raising objections to the performance of a ceremony for Vullikan's daughter---her ceremonial hair-cutting. This ceremony usually takes place in early childhood, and is then a minor, even informal matter. But this girl had been sickly, and her father had vowed to the gods, in return for their protection, to make a major occasion of the ceremony, and feast the entire hamlet after offering food to the Ancestors. His submission to Vullan enabled him to keep this vow.

Hamlet unity received further accidental increase from a fire in March 1954. It broke out in the loft of Chāpū's hut, and spread to those of Vulli, Ōndan, Gōpālan, and to a storehut shared by Chāpū and Ōndan. (1). All four huts were destroyed, together with a quantity of paddy (2) and personal property. All these men were of Vulli's major segment, whereas the huts which survived the fire were of Vullan's segment. This misfortune, and its apparently selective incidence (for which in fact the direction of the wind was responsible) was at once attributed to divine anger (dēvavirōdham). Vullan regarded it as a clinching proof of the justice of his case, and the favour shown him by the House-gods. He explained that the malignant spirits employed by Vulli were still active in the hamlet, and that to expel them the entire congregation must unite under his leadership, and make joint offerings to the gods. Until this was done, Vulli's segment of the group would remain vulnerable.

1) The plan in the preceeding section should be consulted.

2) Some paddy was stored in recesses cut in the foundations of these huts. This was not greatly injured; but that stored in the lofts and in wicker containers was totally destroyed.

Alternative explanations of the fire were made. We have said that Atthiyūr was a member of the Seven hamlets association until Vullan withdrew from it. This association includes upper Atthiyūr, and other adjacent hamlets including Kālambilau, and Tōtapora while under Kēlan's Headmanship. Assistance given during and after the fire came from outside this association, with the single exception of upper Atthiyūr; and this despite the fact that they all lie in close proximity to Atthiyūr. The upper Atthiyūr Headman Kallu was prominent in fighting the fire, but even in the crisis of that fight he could be heard shouting that it was due to Vullan's withdrawal from the Seven. The leaders of the Seven not only stayed away, but are even said to have expressed satisfaction that "god has shown his power."

Thus from the first moment the misfortune was interpreted in terms of local groupings and rivalries. Within the hamlet, blame was fixed upon Vulli still, and his segment of the patrigroup were held to have suffered in consequence. Outside the hamlet those favouring Vullan supported his explanation, while those opposed to his policies blamed him, claiming that the misfortune affected the entire patrigroup; and that it was purely fortuitous that the huts burned down all belonged to members of Vulli's segment. Upper Atthiyūr is a branch of lower Atthiyūr, and hence, though they are now a separate corporate group, it was feared that its members also might suffer supernatural consequences of the conflict in the parent hamlet. It was noticed that, at several crises in the conflict, the people of the upper hamlet performed actions emphasising their separateness. One was to build a low mud wall across the path linking the two

hamlets; an act of which Vullan complained bitterly.

After the fire Vullan suggested his congregation should unite to offer the House god a gold bangle and the goddess a gold locket; the cost being put at Rs 50. The juniors at first agreed, but asked for a delay until the loss from the fire could be made good. But before then, Vullikan emerged as a new opponent of Vullan. He was a widower employed by Nochamvayal Veliyan as carter and general factmtum. As such he spent much time outside the hamlet, where his young daughter cooked and kept house for him. At the end of 1954 Veliyan dismissed him; and about the same time he remarried. Both these events brought him into closer contact with the hamlet, where he now spent much of his time.

He led the opposition to Vullan's proposed joint offering. He argued that, before any new vow could be kept, old ones must first be met, and in particular one that was due from Vullan himself. It appeared that Vullan's father Chāti had long ago been given permission to cut down and sell a tree in the "joint" garden on condition that he paid a certain sum into the hamlet funds. He had not done so; but later he, and then his son Vullan, had vowed to make amends by giving the god a gold bangle. This bangle, argued Vullikan, must be paid in by Vullan before the congregation can be asked to subscribe to further offerings. This argument won over several juniors; and a new contest in cursing began. Vullan's first move was to emphasise that Vullikkan was not born into the patrigroup but affiliated to it; and to question his status as a member.

Apart from the fire, no serious misfortune or illness attacked

Chāpū or his family during all this time. Vulli's son Ōndan was less fortunate. His wife suffers from persistent bad health, and his small son Rāghavan had one major illness. Illness and death are recognised to spring from natural causes, but particular individuals may also advance a supernatural explanation, and especially in a situation of known antagonism and hamlet disunity. The accepted remedy is to seek the protection of the Headman and his gods. Prayers may cure a minor sickness, while a major one is met by direct consultation of the gods in a seance. The sufferer may also come to live in the Great hut, the ritual centre of the hamlet, where he is "closest to the gods and Ancestors." But when the Headman(s power is doubted or withheld, the sufferer turns to the gods of his kinsmen, his affines, and his neighbours. Thus Vulli tried to cure his dropsy by going to stay in his wife's hamlet of Kotūr. Sickness or fear of sickness had something to do with the emigration from the hamlet of Kēsavan and of Chickanan, and with Ucchan's periodic absences before his death.

To cure his son, Ōndan invoked the help of the Locality Headman at Nochamvayal; and Rāghavan was put under the protection of their gods, after which he recovered. This establishes a relationship known as servitude or dependence (adima) between that hamlet and the boy, which endures until his marriage. He could have applied for similar help to the leader of the Seven, but to have done so would have exposed him to the anger of his own hamlet Headman. The treatment of his wife included periodic stays of varying duration with her maternal uncle. After the fire had destroyed his own hut and that of

his dead father, Ōndan and his family lived in the storehut in his garden for about six months. Chāpū and Gōpālan (who had suffered no major misfortunes apart from the fire) rebuilt their former huts, but Ōndan rebuilt outside the compound, in his garden. One motive in doing so was unquestionably a desire to separate himself from the hamlet in which his father was killed by the Headman's curse, and in which cursing (between Vullan and Vullikan) still goes on.

This motive is certainly the main one, but there may be others. Prestige is perhaps one of them. All the higher castes, and all immigrants, build in isolation on their own plots of land, so that Ōndan can claim to be following a higher caste pattern. Moreover his new hut is not of the traditional Kuruma type, built by Kuruma kin and neighbours, but of a quite different pattern, and built by a Hindu (immigrant) mason and his labourers. Its erection cost Ōndan about Rs 450, whereas he might have rebuilt his old hut for as little as Rs 100. (1).

This move has not involved a total break with the hamlet, but is rather a demonstration of Ōndan's wish to avoid involvement in cursing. It has not proved entirely successful, and it has drawn upon him a good deal of criticism. His wife continues to suffer bouts of sickness, and these the Headman blames upon her spatial separation from the Great hut. So that, whenever she is ill, Ōndan and his family are forced to leave their new hut and stay in one of the empty huts in the hamlet compound. This they did twice during 1955, either in acceptance of the Headman's explanation, or fearing his curse if they ignored him.

1) Part of this sum was raised as a loan from a local Muslim merchant.

The decision to rebuild inside or outside a hamlet after a fire is one of unusual importance and interest at the present time. Kuruma institutions are under heavy pressures making for their change or abandonment. Residence in exclusive hamlets is a trait of tribal or low-caste status, as the Kurumas are aware. The Administration is also putting pressure on them to abandon their communal form of residence. A few days after the fire, Atthiyūr was visited by the Administrative Officer of the Colony, who announced that he would grant them a permit to cut free bamboo for rebuilding, and strongly urged them to rebuild in dispersed sites. The Kurumas (whose spokesman was Upper Atthiyūr Kallu) replied that they would be happy to do so if only the Colony would give them the land.

A very similar process occurred in the large hamlet of Edakkal a few miles away. This was totally burnt out in February 1953. Twenty-two huts were destroyed, with nine storehuts, and two children were burnt to death. The Colony Officer estimated the loss to be about Rs 50,000 when he visited the site, and again he urged the abandonment of the hamlet, and rebuilding on separate sites. This would have been easier than at Atthiyūr, as there is less pressure on land at Edakkal; but again his plea was ignored, save by two men. The other twenty families all rebuilt on their former sites within the compound.

The circumstances attending their decision to do so must be mentioned, though briefly. In 1952 the hamlet Headman was expelled from hamlet and office by his juniors. This action was taken because

he neglected his priestly duties, and that not of laziness but of intent. By limiting the access of the congregation to their gods, he wished to compel their support against a rival elder, the Manager. Instead of winning this support he mobilised it against himself, and was removed from office. Had Vulli in Atthiyūr been an abler man, he might have been able to mobilise similar support against Vullan. His expulsion from Edakkal hamlet was only formal, as he was already living, not in the Great hut, but in a converted storehut built on his garden lands. Of the two Edakkal men who rebuilt outside the compound after the fire, one was the (only) son of the ostracised Headman, the other was a prosperous young cultivator with ambitions of acceptance in "immigrant" Hindu society. The decision to settle inside or outside the compound was certainly not controlled by economics alone, at Atthiyūr as at Edakkal. Atthiyūr Chāpū certainly, and probably Gōpālan also, could have afforded to rebuild in their gardens as Ōndan had done, if they wished to do so.

Looking back at the Atthiyūr dispute as one internal to the hamlet, a number of illuminating points emerge. One is the attempted dissociation of the Manager and juniors from the conflict between Headman and Headman-elect. Rights over property hardly entered the matter, though each man tried to win support by disputing a mode of inheritance: Vulli claimed to uphold traditional rights by asserting the adelphic succession of rights over the Ancestral paddy-plot, while Vullan supported Gōpālan's claim to monopolise the land of his dead or absent elder brothers. But Vullan cultivated no land, and Vulli did very little work after his accident. The former was maintained

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in part by his sons (1) and in part by the income from his paddyland; Vulli drew an income from his land, part of which he leased out to Chāpū and Ōndan, while cultivating the remainder himself. Chāpū and Ōndan were not sorry to see him die, since they were able to take over his land as heirs. A possible co-heir, Vulli's ten-year-old son by his second wife, did not remain in the hamlet, though he might return when he is older to claim membership and a share of his father's land: he left with his mother, who returned to her natal hamlet and remarried soon after. (2). Both Vullan and Vulli were in the hamlet much of the time, with little to do but brood upon their wrongs, while the juniors were working in the fields.

The dispute throws light on the structure of the patrigroup, and in particular on the extent to which we are justified in speaking of it as being segmented. Both Vullan and Vulli were members of the senior living generation, and each was the senmor male member of one of the two major segments into which this group is divided; one stemming from the founder Kolumban and the other from his younger brother Chandran. Vullan's curse against Vulli made use of the ghost of a man of Vulli's segment, while one of those employed by Vulli was the ghost of a woman of Vullan's segment. Each expected support from the juniors of his own segment, while making specific efforts to gain supporters in that of the other, thus isolating his opponent. In the event support was accorded on personal grounds rather than those of segmentary affiliation. Vullan won the support of Gōpālan but had little support from his own sons or from Kāvilan. Vulli won that of Vullikan but got little support from Ōndan or Chāpū.

1) The younger son Appu was absent from the hamlet from 1952 until

he married in July 1953. During this time he had worked as a labourer. It was his third marriage: his two previous wives had left him soon after marrying him. On returning to the hamlet in 1953 he was allotted the Great hut to live in, and undertook to maintain his father. Previously the elder son Mādhavan had maintained him, or had helped to do so. Neither son was closely involved in the cursing contests with Vulli and Vullikan.

2) Ōndan, in confirming that this lad retains the right to return to Atthiyūr and claim full membership unless and until he does so in some other hamlet, added that he himself had thought of approaching the lad to ask him to return to Atthiyūr as soon as possible. He would then be able to register part of his own holding in the boy's name, as it exceeds the maximum allowed by the Colony. He would thus increase his own security; and the lad would be useful in helping with the cultivation.

Once disunity in the hamlet is admitted, then the House-gods withdraw their protection or can no longer extend it effectively; indeed their power is a function of hamlet unity. A medium is likely to refuse to act in a seriously disunited hamlet; so in a very real sense the gods withdraw their power, and decisions requiring divine sanction can no longer be made. Concern then focusses on the supposed sympathies and affiliations of particular Ancestors. A misdeed attributed to Vullan's father is used against him by Vullikan; Ōndan's move to the new hut reflects concern with his father's spirit. It has already been mentioned that a Headman may expel an individual spirit from the Great hut; by 1955 a rumour was circulating that Vullan had expelled Vulli's ghost in this manner, and that he was using it against Vullikan, or against Ondan.

There are other reasons why the juniors took little part in the dispute, and why some went to great lengths to display neutrality. Humility is valued by the Kurumas, as in most societies in India; and it can be used for specific effect against an arrogant opponent. In remaining aloof Vulli played a martyr's role, churinge nikkal--- standing with bowed head. In doing so he hoped to convict his Headman of arrogance in the sight of gods and men, and to bring divine anger upon him. In Edakkal, the refusal of the Headman to perform his priestly role was also an attempt to put pressure on the gods as well as upon the congregation. For a junior to raise his head, as Vullikan has done, is to put himself in danger, in a supernaturally vulnerable state. This danger is

multiplied if the junior is of a generation below that of the Headman. Thus Ōndan could support either his father or Vullikan against Vullan; but independent opposition to him as his father's elder brother would be deemed foolhardy.

The major break between generations, traditionally reflected in economic status within the hamlet as well as in ceremonial status, means that conflict within the hamlet tends to be most severe between elders of the seniormost generation with living members, especially when they are widely separated genealogically, as were Vullan and Vulli, Vullan and Vullikan---the latter being a member of Vullan's (or Chandran's) segment by adoption into the patrigroup. When the Headman has no living successor in his generation, he can intervene with greater authority in disputes within the succeeding generation. Vullan's refusal to delegate any of his priestly powers in the face of his blindness, or to recognise Vulli's wife as Headwoman, could have been more readily accepted were he the only living man of his generation, but he is not. He can only justify himself by attributing sins and mistakes to Vulli and Vullikan; and by exaggerating the gap in age that separates them. Vullan is about 65, but lays claim to be 80; whereas Vulli and Vullikan, both over 45, are "mere boys."

The Manager remained aloof from the dispute, although he was the uterine brother of Vulli. Vulli's claim to succeed to the Ancestral paddyfield may have been an attempt to involve him; but the practical Chapu insisted that the matter should put off until Vullan died, when he might intervene. Thus he did not antagonise either man. It was important for him not to lose Vullan's favour, for his second daughter became mature in 1952-3, and so would soon expect to marry.

Vullikan similarly needed Vullan's offices as Headman for the ceremonial head-shaving of his daughter in 1954, and so made sumission to Vullan, though the two quarrelled again later, Vullan accusing Vullikan of 'disobedience' and of secret cursing. It is Vullikan's hope that Vullan will be dead by the time he needs the Headman's services again, for his daughter's wedding about 1962.

Interventmon in a dispute may be sought outside the hamlet. If the dispute is over property to which legal title can be claimed, the intervention of the Courts or Administration is often sought. It may also come from the Nayar landlord or a Kuruma caste Headman; or mediation by an inangu hamlet may be sought. Inangu relations involve institutionalised friendship and ceremonial co-operation, and are contracted between territorially adjacent hamlets which have intermarried at some time in the past. Until the dispute over caste Headmanship lower Atthiyūr and its branch hamlet of upper Atthiyūr were inangu to Nochamvayal and all its branches; but after 1948/9 lower Atthiyūr restricted inangu relations to upper Nochamvayal alone, and both hamlets withdrew from the association called the "Seven". Upper Atthiyūr however retained its inangu connections within the "Seven", except with upper Nochamvayal.

Lower Atthiyūr withdrew from the "Seven" after some of its elders had slighted Vullan, the Atthiyūr Headman, at a wedding. Nochamvayal withdrew somewhat later, in chagrin that a caste office had passed out of the hamlet into another hamlet of the "Seven." This withdrawal prevented external mediation in the Vullan - Vullikan dispute, though the latter avowed his continued loyalty to the Seven. This avowal deprived him of the support of elders of

upper Nochamvayal; while the reassertion of inangu relations between that hamlet and lower Atthiyūr outside the Seven strengthened Vullan's position.

The external relations of patrigroup and hamlet are matter for another chapter, and will not be elaborated here. But we can look forward to those relations by examining the concentric circles of territory which define a total hamlet complex and lead into the outside world. They give spatial definition to it as the resident patrigroup with its founder, generation system and weakly segmentary organisation give it temporal definition.

At the centre of these successive concentric rings of ceremonially defined territory stands the Great hut. This houses the Ancestors, and represents the patrigroup and the collectivity of huts as the Headman represents the personnel of those huts. The establishment of a new hamlet dates from the creation of its Great hut and the installation of House gods. Not every Kuruma settlement is a hamlet in the ceremonial sense, for no Great hut may have been established.

The innermost tract of a hamlet is the compound (mittam), made up of dwelling huts and courtyards, and surrounded by the inner fence, called the "six-ply fence" (ārangetthiye valapu). Beyond this lie the gardens and storehuts, surrounded by the outer fence, called the "sixty-two sticks" (āruvattirendu theri). It is felt that men should not live in this tract, since it implies a voluntary separation from the Great hut and the rest of the patrigroup, yet without making a complete break. Atthiyūr Ōndan

is in this position. As we have seen, his wife is often ill, and this illness is attributed to a supernatural cause, and connected with her residence outside the compound. She is less immediately under divine protection from the Great hut.; and at the onset of each successive fever feels obliged to take up residence in an empty hut within the compound until she recovers.

Beyond the outer fence lies an indeterminate tract of pasture, bushes, and millet-field. It includes the hamlet graveyard, the well and bathing-place, and the shrines of deities who have been expelled from the hamlet or (like Guligan) never admitted. It is called the "Three Thorns", or "Three Bamboos" (mūne mullu); and is said to extend outwards to the "Seven Fences" (yēru vēli), the outer fences of adjacent settlements. It merges imperceptibly with the outermost tract of all, the Region (nādu). This term is an ambiguous one. It may mean anywhere outside a paryicular hamlet but within Wynad; or it may mean a specific tract of territory within Wynad. The caste Headmen usually refer to the territoyy they control as a nādu.

Ōndan regards himself as living in Atthiyūr hamlet still, though he lives outside the compound; whereas Vullan, rebuking him for this, argues that he is virtually living in the "Three Thorns" tract, since the garden site of his new hut is privately-held property, and not part of the joint sector of garden land. No-one, however, suggests that he could be said to be living in the "nādu." The ghost of Kesavan is thought of as living in the "Three Thorns", since it has neither been admitted to the Great hut, nor expelled from it. But

any Ancestor spirit that is expelled is condemned to wander in the nādu indefinitely. This last is a region full of homeless ghosts and unknown deities; and full protection from them can be secured only by residence as close as possible to the centre of all these circles, within the compound, or within the Great hut itself.

Sometimes the position of that centre may be changed, in that a Great hut may be abandoned and replaced by another on a different site, or allowed to fall down and then be rebuilt. Such events are rare, but may occur where a major change of allegiance and of personnel coincide. Thus in Edakkal hamlet all the huts had been rebuilt by 1955 save the Great hut. At Nellivayal such changes have occurred in both upper Nochamvayal and in Tōtapora hamlet. In Tōtapora there has lately been a double switch of allegiance. When Kēlan was Headman he joined the Seven hamlets association, and expelled the Headman-elect, who opposed this policy. When Kēlan died in 1953 this man succeeded to the Headmanship, returned to the hamlet, and reversed Kelan's policy. This last change was symbolised not only by disposal of the contents of the sacred cash box, but by leaving the Great hut unrepaired for several years together: "After two more monsoon rains the roof will fall in. Then, having been exposed to rain and sun and wind, my predecessor's (wrong) policy (nyāyam) will be destroyed. When the roof has fallen in, I and my juniors will join together our money and labour to rebuild the Great hut on the site our ancestors selected."

In upper Nochamvayal the site of the Great hut has been changed completely. This was done after the expulsion of the Headman, one

Marikyan, about twenty years ago. He, like the Headman of Edakkal, had tried to impose a policy on the juniors by withholding his services, and like him had been replaced in office. Marikyan, besides being Headman of his hamlet, had also held a Nayar-given office, that of Headman of the "Seven"; and as he concurrently refused to carry out his duties in respect of that office, he lost it as well. It was conferred on the next most senior man in the senior generation of the "Four Taravāds", Kālambilau Baradhan. This loss of office, at first accepted by Nochamvayal, is now a constant source of annoyance, and accounts for that hamlet having left the Seven soon after lower Atthiyūr had done so.

This series of events, and especially the loss of leadership of the Seven, led the elders to the decision to abandon the Great hut and establish a new one on the opposite side of the Great courtyard. The seriousness of the problem was aggravated by the loss of the hamlet cash-box, which Marikyan kept concealed. It has never been discovered, although the floor of the old Great hut has been repeatedly dug up, and it is now believed that Marikyan passed it on to one of his three sons. These sons left the hamlet after their father died, and established their own huts elsewhere. Two of them live on the ridge across the valley from Nochamvayal. Their presence and supposed possession of the cash-box is felt to be a constant threat to the stability of the hamlet. The crucial elements in this threat are, possession of the cash box; and the question of whether these three men are members of Nochamvayal still or not. One of them is known to have established a cult of local gods in his

hut, and therefore cannot return to reassume membership, but the other two have not. They therefore remain members, and their continued absence from the hamlet at festivals and the like can still be atoned by their offering to pay a fine. No final decision on this matter can be taken before the event, but local elders say that it will be very hard to refuse them readmission if they come back, bringing the original cash-box with them. The time they are thought likely to choose is when one or other of them becomes the seniormost member of the patrigroup, and can therefore return to claim both membership and Headmanship together. As all three brothers are adherents of the Seven, this would involve a major crisis. Many of the hamlet juniors would, perhaps, not be averse to be reunited with the Seven, but few of them would welcome the paying off of old scores which such a return implies, and which is now going on in Totapora.

Chapter IV. Links between hamlets.

IV i: Ties of affinity and of kinship.

The Kuruma caste conveys a strong impression of cultural uniformity and caste exclusiveness to the observer. Its members appear very conscious of their caste (or tribal) identity, and see that caste as a political unit, whose unity they value even while taking sides in factional strife within it. This unity is conceived in terms of territorial divisions of the caste which I term Localities. Each Locality is governed by a caste Headman, traditionally appointed by a Nayar landlord or chieftain. It is primarily a ceremonial unit today, but it has some political functions, and may act as a unit of economic activity also, though always in a ceremonial context. For example, the Headman periodically summons his followers to attend a Locality hunting or fishing expedition. The unit is fully discussed in chapter V.

At this stage it is sufficient to say that each Locality is made up of a number of hamlets: for individual membership of the Locality is through the hamlet rather than through individual loyalties and dependency. Thus the Headman of a hamlet is the individual who ultimately decides whether to end or to continue membership of a Locality. In Atthiyūr, Vulli wished to continue the traditional hamlet membership of the Seven, but the Headman was able to win enough support among the juniors to carry his hamlet out of that Locality, thus isolating Vulli within the hamlet. His membership of the Seven automatically terminated, though his personal loyalty remained constant.

The Locality Headmanship is usually vested in a single patrigroup and hamlet. Where that patrigroup overflows into branch hamlets, the possibility of conflict arises in the matter of succession to the office. The office is usually restricted to the one hamlet (exclusive of exterior members), but as the generation system runs through the entire set of branches, it may happen that the Headman of a branch hamlet is senior to the Locality Headman-elect. This has happened at Nochamvayal. The Nayar landlord traditionally intervened to decide such disputes, but his power no longer matches the traditional extent of his authority. Hamlets established by exterior members of the Locality Headman's patrigroup may also claim to be branches of this patrigroup, which tends to be larger than the average, and to have a greater number of recognised branches. In two small Localities the Headman's patrigroup embraces all the component hamlets, but in most Localities there are also a number of inangu hamlets and yet other unconnected hamlets.

Caste unity may have been felt in the past in opposition to the dominant caste of Nayars; and perhaps today in opposition to the plains immigrants; but an underlying sense of cohesion and of uniformity is provided by individual clan membership and a wide network of affinal and matrilateral ties, linking both individuals and the patrigroups of which they are members. These ties extend across Locality boundaries and the boundaries of intercaste villages to the limits of the caste territory. Atthiyūr, near the eastern limits, has given a bride to a hamlet in Pākam, at

the north-western limits, and Nochamvayal, near Atthiyūr, has intermarried with a hamlet at the south-western limits of the caste territory. The distance between these hamlets is 18 and 15 miles respectively, as the crow flies.

Clanship alone is of little importance as a tie between individuals compared with a tie of kinship or affinity that can be directly traced. It serves primarily as a control on the choice of marriage partner: for the four Kuruma matriclans are exogamous units; but when two strangers meet and strike up a friendship, the discovery of common clan membership may serve to regularise their friendship if no kinship or affinal tie can be traced. Clan membership is seen primarily as membership of a small matrigroup, or short-depth matrilineage, within the clan.

In the preceding chapter I described the contradiction between the Kuruma ideal of the hamlet as a joint family and the reality of a residential group acting as a ceremonial unit, but within which property was constantly being partitioned and reallocated. The pressure to partition comes from a man's sons as soon as they are old enough to marry, and increases as sons are born to that marriage. The dichotomy between these two aspects of the hamlet appears in the form of marriage payments. A small ceremonial brideprice is paid into the sacred cash-box of the bride's hamlet as part of the ceremony, but a large non-ceremonial payment is also made to her father by that of the groom. This money is not distributed among kin, nor do they contribute to it. The

fathers of the two spouses must also meet the expenses of the marriage ceremony and feast from their own private resources.

Marriage marks a dramatic change in the status and interests of a Kuruma. From the age of seven or eight he has begun to separate his life from that of his parents. He continues to eat with them, but in the larger hamlets he sleeps with his fellows of like age and sex in a spare hut used as a boy's dormitory. His labour in herding cattle and performing the lighter operations of cultivation begins to be of use; and while this labour is owed in the first place to his own father, he may work for any member of the hamlet. Whoever employs his labour is expected to provide some small reward, usually in food. This food is normally taken by the boy to his own parents, but occasionally contributed towards a dormitory feast of the boys. Employment of this kind is generally for a few days at a time only, after which his father or another senior man may employ the lad. During this early life the quasi-adelphic bond between lads of the same generation in a hamlet (including exterior members) is strongly emphasised, but subordination to their elders (kāranans) in that generation has not yet become irksome. After marriage competition between uterine, classificatory and fictional brothers in the hamlet increases markedly. Marriage, moreover, marks the stage of social maturity. The groom becomes a member of the Great hut congregation. If he is only a stepson (1) of his "father", the ceremony of marriage from the Great hut makes him a full member of the patrigroup.

Traditionally, marriage meant for a Kuruma hamlet the

1) I.e. the son of a woman born to a previous marriage in another hamlet. Until marriage such a boy may claim rights in either hamle

bringing in of a girl whose services might extend to all the members of her husband's hamlet. The newly-married couple would inhabit the Great hut until another bride was brought in, and only then would they move to their own dwelling hut. During her stay in the Great hut the junior wife would cook for the whole hamlet, under the supervision of the Headman's wife, or female Headman. Sexual rights in the bride were available to all her husband's younger brothers in the hamlet, real and fictional. Conversely he now had rights in their labour. The Kuruma definition of a fine woman (nallu penna) is, significantly, "one who can satify four (men) and prepare food for five"----i.e. for the four men and herself. The phrase "a four-man woman" (nāl'āl̄u penna) is still used among men as a term of commendation, though never of their own wives, and not directly to a woman.

Between a man and his younger brother's wife, avoidance relations exist. She should not sit in his presence, nor approach within three yards of his person. Sexual relations between them would be adulterous and mystically polluting to the community. Nowadays only older people observe spatial avoidance strictly, but the prohibition on sexual relations remains. In 1950/1 Atthiyūr Koravan the affiliated son of Vattan was expelled from the hamlet for having adulterous relations with the then wife of Atthiyūr Vullan's son Appu. Appu was junior to Koravan by two years. Koravan and the woman have continued their illicit relationship, and now live outside the hamlet as outcastes.

The servant-like role of the junior wife parallels that of her husband. Just as she cooks for the hamlet, so her husband's labour is still at the call of his elder brothers and father or "fathers". But even making allowance for recent economic change that has accelerated partition of property, it seems unlikely that this system could have operated in large hamlets in which the patrigroup contained many segments or branches. It did operate until recently, as has been shown, in Upper Atthiyūr, but then this hamlet is small, and all its members in the Headman's generation have a common mother. Every hamlet begins with a single Ancestor and his wife (or two brothers and their wives), so the system may always operate at first in the life-span of a hamlet, but is progressively less likely to continue as numbers and the genealogical distance between members increases; and as and if the landed property is partitioned (1).

Today, residence in the Great hut for three days after the marriage is obligatory for a newly-married couple, but is unlikely to last longer. If it does, it is usually because the groom's father, from poverty or some other cause, has been unable to build or find the couple their own hut. In building a new hut the members of a hamlet usually give their labour freely in return for meals, but the cost of the material is about Rs 100. Residence in the Great hut is inconvenient, for there is little privacy.

The ideal marriage is a lifelong monogamous union. About 50% of completed marriages conform to this ideal. Leviratic and polygynous unions are known, but rare. One case of polygyny was established

1) The levirate is permitted, and instances are known, but are very rare nowadays. Upper Atthiyūr provides an instance. This may have operated together with adelphic polyandry to limit the size of hamlets, but on this we can only conjecture. There is no account of Kuruma social organisation earlier than that of C. Gopalan Nair in 1911. In talking of the "traditional system" I have relied largely on Kuruma informants and the evidence of genealogies.

and several others, now extinct, authenticated beyond reasonable doubt. In such unions the husband is expected to establish his wives in separate households, at some distance from each other. Thus the settlement of Vattuvādi, a branch of lower Nochamvayal hamlet and about a mile distant from it, on the opposite ridge, was initially established to house the second (polygynous) wife of the hamlet Headman, "Elephant" Ōnan, nearly a century ago. A man's first wife, married with full ceremonial (kanya kalyānam) is known as a virgin-wife (kanya penna), whereas any consecutive marriage is marked by little ceremony, and the wife is described as a "hand-wife" (kai penna) or "led-wife." Concubine would be a close translation of this term, but since the rights of a kai penna in her husband's hamlet are virtually identical with those of a kanya penna, as also their statuses, I have preferred to retain the term "wife", qualifiying it where necessary as "second wife", or "subsequent wife."

The status difference between the two may derive in part from a filtering down of Sanskritic values, but more probably from the diminution of ceremonial marking the union as an alliance between patrigroups. There is also a diminution in the amount of brideprice paid. For a virgin marriage, the ceremonial brideprice is Rs 5---8, and the secular brideprice may exceed Rs 100. For each subsequent marriage the ceremonial brideprice is diminished by one rupee, down to a minimum of Rs 1---8; the secular brideprice varies widely with the desirability of the woman and the extent of her own activity and independence. A young woman who has borne a child may fetch nearly as high a sum as for her first marriage, but

only if the subsequent marriage is negotiated through her father. If the woman elopes with a lover, their union can easily be regularised, and no stigma will attach to it once the ceremonial brideprice is offered and accepted, but her father will be lucky to get more than a bottle of arrack out of the new husband.

The secular brideprice, like the ceremonial, is paid entirely in cash. It is almost certainly an innovation, perhaps no more than fifty years old. Elderly informants claimed that in their youth it was as little as five or ten rupees, or took the form of payment in paddy or in labour. Gopalan Nair makes no mention of a secular brideprice existing in 1911, which is a negative confirmation of this, though he mentions the ceremonial brideprice, paid in cash then as now. Such a payment, in cash, is typical of the upper polluting castes in Malabar, such as the Tiyyars, though it is not found among the Nayars.

Secular brideprice, as an innovation, indicates the increasing monetisation of the Kuruma economy. As a private payment between the fathers of the two spouses it emphasises the emergence of the conjugal family from within the extended family of which it is a part. It is doubtful whether it can be said to exercise a stabilising influence on the union, since repayment can be demanded only if the marriage breaks up within a year, and then through the fault of the bride rather than the groom. Thus, if the woman leaves her husband, his father can visit her natal hamlet and demand "money or woman", <u>āle ō ātham</u>, of her father; but if her husband has sent her away, all claim to repayment is forfeited.

This development of brideprice as a factor in marriage has been accompanied by changes in the form of marriage and in the rights claimed by a husband in his wife. Both levirate and sororate are traditional forms of marriage, which can be entered into without the need of a ceremony marking their establishment: a younger brother can take over the widow of his dead elder brother, and a man can similarly cohabit with his dead wife's younger sister. Both forms of marriage are almost extinct, though genealogical records show that they were practised in the past. The only leviratic union established at Nellivayal with one party still living, was in upper Atthiyūr. Here the widow Ōnathi, now over 60, had married Poleyan of that hamlet, and on his death was taken as wife by his uterine younger brother Kuttan. Two sons were born to Poleyan by Ōnathi, after which she left him to cohabit with various lovers, to one of which a third son, Ucchan, was born. When the eldest son Kallu was of an age to marry, she returned to Atthiyūr, where Poleyan had recently died, and became Kuttan's leviratic wife without further ceremony. To this union a daughter was born.

The rights of younger brothers in a man's wife are traditional, but they also are lapsing, or are being denied. It is customary for them to be exercised not openly, but by stealth; but husbands now tend to deny them altogether, and one divorce which occurred in 1954 had such a denial as its principal motive. The young husband demanded, but was unable to secure, exclusive sexual rights in his wife, and sent her home on the grounds of unchastity. In doing so he forfeited any claim to the repayment of brideprice, since her father was able to claim that

his daughter's alleged misconduct was in fact permitted by custom.

Divorce is marked by repayment of the ceremonial brideprice. Repayment cannot be refused by the hamlet Headman of whom it is requested, and until it is repaid, the woman cannot remarry (1). It is not returned when a woman is widowed, and leaves her dead husband's hamlet to return home and remarry. Her unmarried children normally accompany her, but the presence of her ceremonial brideprice in the sacred cash-box validates their right to return later and claim membership of the hamlet and patrigroup. This right can be exercised until each child marries, when it automatically lapses, as has been explained.

Very occasionally such rights are established in three or even four hamlets. The woman's children are then able to select one of them, choosing the one in which their affections and material interests seem most secure. Cases are known in which one brother has established himself in one hamlet and another brother in another, but almost always the siblings remain a group, the choice of the eldest brother determining that of his juniors. Choice is determined by brothers rather than sisters, and is usually more apparent than real. A youth hopeful of claiming membership in his true father's hamlet cannot just appear there and demand his rights, but must keep up regular visiting relations with it. Acceptance of the eldest brother by a hamlet implies acceptance of all his siblings too. It is a point of increased concern to the mother, since she looks for security in in old age to her sons rather than to leviratic unions.

1) Occasionally an attempt is made to put pressure on a woman to return to a deserted husband by refusing repayment. Such an PTO

attempt is recounted below, in chapter V. The rate of divorce is difficult to estimate in actual figures since the Kurumas make no clear distinction between it, as represented by repayment of the ceremonial brideprice, and separation. A separated woman may still cohabit with another man as his kaipenna, and bear him children, before the brideprice is repaid. Repayment may occur at any time between the cohabitation and the marriage of her eldest child.

When the first child, and more particularly the first male child is born to a couple, the father is told by his elders: "now you have vīda!" In Malabar "vīda" means a Nayar dwelling-house, and also the family inhabiting it, normally a minor segment of a matrilineage. Here the reference is to the emergence of a new elementary family within the hamlet, to a new point of segmentation within the patrigroup. It is the woman and her children who form the "vīda", though the man is the point of reference, and his descendants may say after his death: "I am of so-and-so's segment." If the couple have beem living in the Great hut hitherto , they will certainly leave it now, and establish thesmelves in a private dwelling hut as soon as possible. The marriage is now regarded as being more stable than hitherto, and the wife's ties with her natal marked, marked by frequent visits in the months following marriage, become less intense. A woman's first child is sometimes born in her natal hamlet, but subsequent childern always in the conjugal hamlet, save in very exceptional circumstances (1).

The birth of children through marriage is the main process of recruitment into patrigroup and hamlet. It augments the group, but is also felt to threaten its unity. That unity is seen essentially as the unity of the senior generation of brothers, obedient to their kāranan, the Headman. The birth of a son to one of them challenges this unity since it implies a new process of filiation within the group. Directly it affects the group of uterine brothers; indirectly, classificatory and adoptive or fictional brothers also. The threat is traced out of the hamlet back to the mother's hamlet and matrigroup. Mother and son are,

1) A high proportion of marriages that break up do so within a year of the marriage ceremony. The partners must be physically mature, and

they should not have met beforehand, or established an intimacy. The statement that a woman's first child is often born in her natal hamlet appears to contradict the ideal pattern of birth into a patrigroup by birth in the hamlet to a member (male) of that patrigroup. However, a firstborn will still claim he was born IN his father's hamlet: the decisive point seems to be be that he acheived membership by birth and not by later affiliation.

as it were, establishing an alien group within the father's hamlet. Every woman is said to have "two houses", her natal and conjugal hamlets, and this ambiguity extends to her sons. They cannot settle or inherit in the mother's natal hamlet (taiyillam), but may reside there temporarily at any time, and must call upon the ritual services of the mother's brother from time to time. They are lifelong members of the matrigroup, but become full members of the paternal patrigroup and hamlet only when they marry from its Great hut.

Marriage is always outside the hamlet and patrigroup, whichever be the wider group. It creates an affinal tie (bandham) between the two groups which regulates their future interrelations.. Only the parents and uterine (or seminal) siblings of the spouses refer to each other as affines (bandhukāre), but every member of the two hamlets recognises the link, and subordinates behaviour to it. For example, it is forbidden to take a bride from a hamlet to which your hamlet has previously given one, for "the brideprice must not return."

The assymmetry of the link is expressed in terminology as well as behaviour. To the husband and his uterine brothers the link with his wife's hamlet is a "big link" (valiya bandham), and they must be polite and submissive to the bride's brothers. These do not reciprocate this attitude, for to them the link is a small one (cheriya bandham). They have given a girl and her procreative power, but despite the cash payment they exercise a degree of control over her. They cannot claim a bride in return, but must turn to other hamlets. The reciprocal inangu relation between hamlets is usually established in the generation after the first affinal link. Inangu-hood does not necessarily follow on intermarriage.

In the generation following the establishment of a link through marriage, affinity is translated into kinship, and the great and small links are then described as money-ties, or kānaparisham, and blood-ties, or chōreparisham. Parisham means (loosely) family; and we have already referred to the terms kānam and chōre. Kānam means sight, and also a long-term land tenure, or the money payment for such a tenure. The ceremonial brideprice, paid into the cashbox of the bride's natal hamlet, is called kānapanam. Chōre means simply "blood". The offspping of a particular marriage are the chōreparisham or blood-family of their maternal uncle, but are spoken of as being chōreparisham to his hamlet, regardless of the extension within it of true connection by blood. The same offspring are the kānaparisham children of their father, or of their mother's husband, whom they call "father." These ties are implicit in intermarrying hamlets from the time of marriage onwards, but become explicit only when the wife bears a child. This is held to stabilise the union, and the mother acquires a double link with her conjugal hamlet; through the husband, and through the child, who may inherit property in it. Sterility is grounds for divorce.

"Parisham" is an elastic term, like our own "kinship", and its extension in respect of particular individuals is a frequent subject of discussion. Under it are subsumed rights and forms of behaviour, including symbolic exchanges of food and material objects, rights of inheritance, residence, and maintenance. Its extension controls exogamy. The two major exogamous units are the matriclans and the patrigroup (including recognised branches in different hamlets).

A man's cross cousins fall outside both groups, but he may not marry them "because of parisham." Ego is a lifelong honorary member of his maternal hamlet; he is a "chōreparisham child", who may claim shelter there but not inheritance. This tie is particularly close before he marries and so acheives full membership of his paternal hamlet. To marry the mother's brother's daughter would, therefore, be incestuous. On the other side, the father's sister's daughter is an honorary member of Ego's paternal hamlet. No woman of Ego's father's sister's daughter's hamlet may marry back into that of Ego, for to do so would "make the brideprice return." On the other hand a further bride can be taken from that which has already given one, provided the elders on both sides agree there is no bar of parisham, i.e. of kinship.

Decisions about this are not involved in every marriage, for many Kurumas express preference for a marriage with some distant hamlet with which there is no known tie; but before each marriage the House gods of both spouses must be consulted, and in effect the medium and the elders of the two congregations finally pponounce on the matter. If there is any bar of kinship, it will almost certainly be discovered and decided about. The main problem is to decide how far the limits of parisham shall extend within a large patrigroup that has branched out into two or more hamlets. The generation system will extend through all these hamlets, and ideally they should act as a single unit in reaching such a decision. In fact much depends on how close are relations between those hamlets---regardless of

Genealogy

showing the connection between

the hamlets of Kālambilau and

Tōtapora, at Nellivayal.

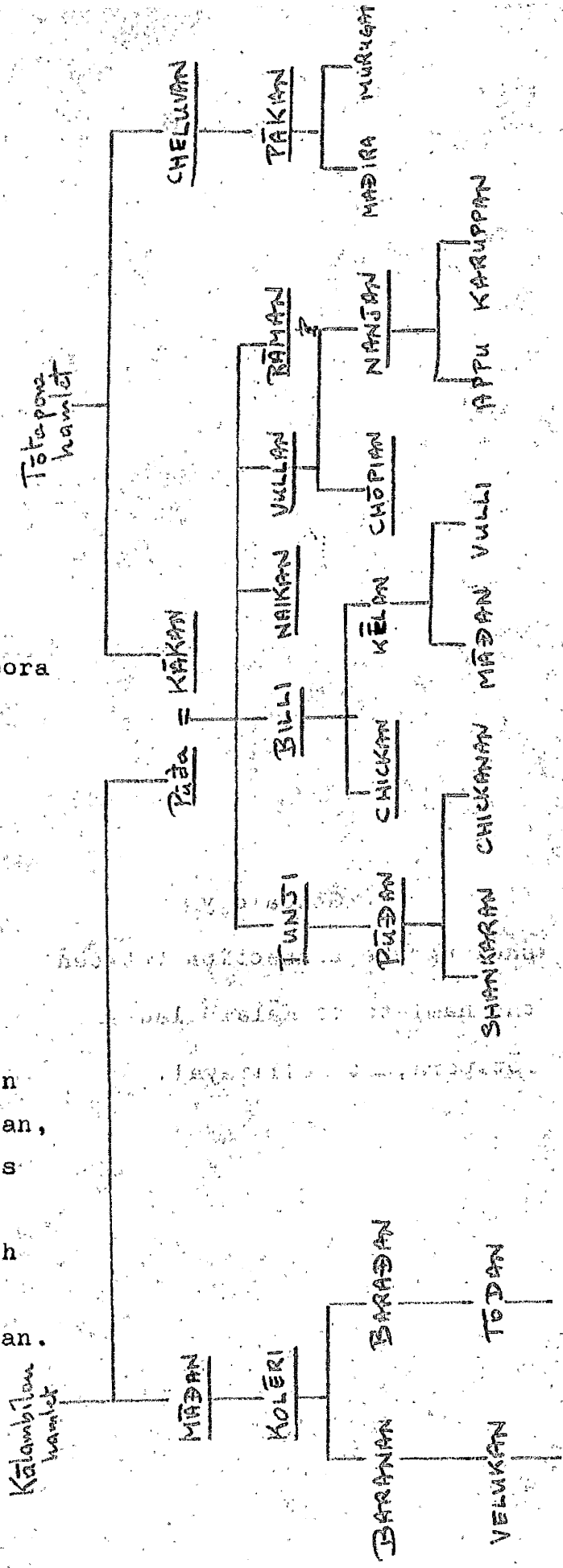
Note.

Underlining of names denotes death.

Baranan has been Headman of Kālambilau since about 1940, and Kelan Headman of Tōtapora from about the same time until his death in June 1953.

He was succeeded by Madhira, who died in early 1955, and he by Murugan.

Karuppan the Manager of Tōtapora is own son (petta magan) to Nanjan, but his senior Appu is his 2nd wife's son (porāthe magan). Both Mādhan and Vulli are porāthe magans to Kēlan. All other living members of both hamlets are "own sons" to their fathers.



whether those relations are hostile or co-operative. Thus Mottankara and Totapora hamlets, mentioned in Chapter III as having a common origin, cannot intermarry because of this. On the other hand they do not come into contact with each other, do not recognise a common generation system, and so can hardly be spoken of a single patrigroup. In deciding on marriages they take no account of each other's affinal affiliations. The two Atthiyūr hamlets on the other hand would do so, though they do not attend marriages in each other's hamlets. The custom is that one hamlet takes only one bride from another in any one generation, exclusive of the sororate. In the subsequent generation a further bride may be taken from the same hamlet, but only in marriage to a man of a different segment. It is allowable for two brides to be taken in the same generation from the same hamlet if they are to marry men of different hamlets but of the same patrigroup. In and after the third generation, the link between the intermarrying hamlets may be forgotten, or it may be revived by a fresh marriage. Only when the link has been forgotten can the direction of bride-giving be reversed---if the Irishism be permitted.

Where hamlets are distant from each other, intermarriage follows the customary rules adumbrated above. Where they are closely adjacent the fact of proximity may complicate matters. It may lead to the establishment of inangu relations involving ceremonial and usually some economic co-operation. It may give rise to great tension. I shall try to illustrate this from Nellivayal material, and particularly from the relations between Tōtapora and Kālambilau hamlets, the genealogies of which are given on the oppposite page. Totapora was a hamlet of

seven conjugal families, and Kālambilau of four. Tōtapora had no real or fictional patrilateral ties with other hamlets save that remote tie with Mottankara mentioned earlier; whereas Kālambilau was a branch of a large patrigroup extending over several hamlets in the neighbourhood, including Lower Nochamvayal and Upper Nochamvayal. Tradition tells us that all these branches were at one time "united" and co-operative; and Totapora, having taken a bride from Kālambilau in the past, was inangu to the entire patrigroup. The office of providing an adviser and a medium to the Locality (the "Thirty Six") was conferred on it by the Headman of lower Nochamvayal, who was also Locality Headman. The regularity of these relations was disturbed in and after 1946, when the branches of the Nochamvayal patrigroup began competing for a further office, that of Headman of the Seven. About that time it passed, as we have said earlier, from Upper Nochamvayal to Kālambilau. Both Nochamvayals opposed this shift of the office.

Disunity in the Nochamvayal patrigroup forced Totapora either to mediate or to take sides. Under Kēlan's Headmanship they espoused the side of Kālambilau and the body of the Seven; and about 1949 friendly relations with Lower Nochamvayal came to an end. Kēlan defended this policy of supporting the Kālambilau faction on the grounds (among others) of the importance of the first local affinal tie contracted when his father's father married Kalambilau Pūdha. This man, Kākan, was the founder of the hamlet, together with his younger brother Cheluvan. Two juniors descended from Cheluvan,

Madhira and Murugan, alone refused to accept this policy. Among their reasons for doing so was competition for mediumship. Kēlan was acting as Locality medium for the Thirty Six, and also at the nearby village temple; but he was growing old. Both Madhira and Murugan were novice mediums, and eager to replace him. Murugan, the younger and more capable of the two brothers, was actively encouraged in this by lower Nochamvayal. Kēlan resented this, and forced them to leave the hamlet, denouncing them as false mediums. Their father Pākan was already dead at this time. Madhira left for his wife's hamlet, and Murugan was accomodated in lower Nochamvayal, where he acted as medium and representkative of the inangu hamlet.

Kēlan died in 1953, and both brothers returned to the hamlet. Madhira was the senior male member, and so became hamlet Headman, and Murugan the next most senior member Headman-elect. Relations with Kālambilau and the Seven were broken off, and those with Nochamvayal and the Thirty Six restored. It has already been described how they ceremonially dispersed the contents of Kēlan's cash box and let the roof of the Great hut collapse to "destroy (his) sinful policy." This change was anticipated by the juniors of Kākan's segment, but they did not feel able to resist it openly, or prevent the return of these two brothers. Instead they resisted it secretly, through curses, with the support of Kālambilau. The leaders of resistance were Kēlan's son Mādhan, Appu, and Shankaran, who had acted as Headman elect under Kēlan, after Madhira and Murugan had left the hamlet. Support for the two brothers came from the hamlet Manager, Karuppan. Karuppan is one of the youngest members of the hamlet, and junior to

to both Shankaran and to his father's second wife's son Appu. Both men have expressed the opinion that they, not Karuppan, should be Manager: Shankaran as the senior member of Kākan's segment, in which the Managership descends; and Appu as Karuppan's elder brother with a common "father". Karuppan now looks to Madhira and Murugan for support against these claims.

The two factions in Tōtapora, divided primarily over the question of allegiance to Seven or to Thirty Six, now began a protracted discussion of their relations with Kālambilau in terms of kinship. Murugan insisted that the kinship connection between them lapsed with the death of Pūdha's children, and certainly with that of her grandchildren, of whom Kēlan was the last survivor in the hamlet. He complained that Kēlan's son Mādhan wished to keep the link alive, and addressed the Kālambilau elders as "father" or "father's father" and regarded them as the hamlet Headmen of Totapora rather than himself or his brother Madhira. Mādhan and his supporters defended their support for Kālambilau by admitting the original affinal link but assimilating it to a patrilateral one. "Under Kēlan we and Kālambilau were just like brothers; now Murugan is keeping us apart. There is much sickness in the hamlet because of this separation."

Murugan lost no chance to emphasise the affinal nature of the connection, and the fact that the kinship established by it had lapsed. He blamed the proximity of the two hamlets for the confusion.

> "For two separate <u>vīdas</u> (sic) the hamlets are too close together; There isn't so much as a fence between us, only a low ridge at the edge of the compound. Things would have been different had there been a fence; but as it is, there is much sickness."

Illness is generally attributed to supernatural causes; and always so

in situations of great tension. Its incidence was almost entirely in Kākan's segment, which included many young children. Both parties believed its source to be the anger of Kālambilau, as is implied in Murugan's referance to the fence. Filiation through Pūdha to Kālambilau would explain its prevalence in Kākan's segment, whereas Madhira and Murugan are of another segment, and so enjoy greater immunity from the effects of Kālambilau's wrath. Much of the discussion on relations with Kālambilau was whether Pūdha's immediate children, or all her descendants in Tōtapora could be called chōreparisham children to Kālambilau. Murugan, backed by many elders of the neighbourhood, and with an impressive body of examples and proverbs illustrating customary usage, insisted that it was limited to the generation of her children alone, and then passed out of the hamlet with her ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ daughters, as these married and their brothers died off. Mādhan and his supporters insist that the connection cannot be broken; it is one of descent. It cannot be forgotten in view of their proximity to Kālambilau, and therefore it should and must affect their relations with Kālambilau, including their support for the Seven.

The situation might be resolved, when Murugan dies, by Totapora coming to be regarded as a branch of Kālambilau, as West Thoduti is today deemed a branch of Nochamvayal. Murugan is childless, and the children of Madhira (who died in 1954) seem to be settled elsewhere. But there is one great obstacle to this possibility: the fact that Totapora also has affinal ties, or had them, with Nochamvayal, to which she remains inangu. Kālambilau

and the Nochamvayals are branches of the same patrigroup, and hence an exogamous unit. Supposing Totapora were to join Kālambilau as a fictional branch, then the tie with Nochamvayal and other hamlets must be denied or broken by Totapora (1); or the Nochamvayal patrigroup itself break into two. The true nature of the connection with Kālambilau could be denied as the upper levels of the genealogy was forgotten; and the Totapora House-gods (which differ from those of Kālambilau) could be housed outside the compound and replaced in the Great hut by those of Kalambilau---assuming unanimity about this among the members of the two congregations. Alternatively, inangu relations might be reaffirmed by Totapora taking another bride from Kālambilau at some time in the future.

Disunity within the Nochamvayal patrigroup also affects another inangu hamlet; that of Atthiyūr. Until about 1950 both Atthiyūr hamlets were inangu to all the branches of Nochamvayal, but with the dispute over leadership of the Seven, lower Atthiyūr now regards itself as inangu only (or primarily) to upper Nochamvayal, whereas upper Atthiyūr is inangu to Kālambilau, and continues its membership of the Seven. Since its foundation lower Atthiyūr has taken three brides in consecutive generations from upper Nochamvayal, all of them marrying men of Chandran's segment of Atthiyūr. Thus the Headman Vullan is linked more closely to Nochamvayal than his rival Vulli, who supported the claims of Kālambilau to lead the Seven.

1) It should be remarked that the custom of assymetric bride-giving between hamlets, often only once in two or three generations, makes it easier for the two hamlets to merge, if they are close neighbours. The motive for doing so in the case of West Thoduti appears to be a desire for closer association with the Locality Headman's hamlet of lower Nochamvayal.

The crisis in relations between Kālambilau and Tōtapora is not typical of those between intermarrying hamlets or inangu hamlets. It has been described for several reasons, some of which will emerge later. The immediate object is to show how the non-unilineal descent system of the hamlet renders it vulnerable to pressure from a bride-giving hamlet; or conversely how merging becomes a possibility after three or more generations have passed from the last giving of a bride. The decisive factor seems to be continuous and close social relations between them, implying close physical proximity, which cease to be redefined in each generation or each alternate generation by the acceptance of a new bride. Atthiyūr has accepted three brides in three generations from Nochamvayal, therefore her inangu relation with Nochamvayal is unequivocal. This ties in with the Kuruma practice of ideal practice of taking brides either from remote hamlets, or at regular intervals from a particular adjacent hamlet or set of hamlets housing a single patrigroup.

Lower Atthiyūr was found to have 21 connections established through marriage, of which only four were with hamlets within two miles of it ---three with upper and one with lower Nochamvayal. The average distance of the connected hamlets is seven miles, and most represent, unlike that with Nochamvayal, one single connection only, over two generations. Those of the third (extinct) generation are moribund and already being forgotten. These connections are ramified through the matrigroup of each individual. Connections through it represent personal kindred only. Those of Atthiyūr Vullan, for instance, give

him kindred in fifteen hamlets. But besides being widely dispersed, the matrigroup is constantly fissuring, and Vullan maintains active contacts with only four of the fifteen. This reduction in the number of his possible connections is due partly to his age and blindness, which reduce his mobility, and partly to his poverty, which makes his more distant connections in the matrigroup less anxious to visit him. Such connections tend to persist longer in respect of a rich and powerful man than a poor one. With these groups, and with the four matriclans of which they are articulations, we now concern ourselves.

IV ii: Matriclan and Matrigroup in their relation to the hamlet.

The four matriclans are non-corporate exogamous units. The first impression left with the observer is that they are of little importance or interest to the Kuruma, beyond limiting his choice of partner in marriage. Deeper investigation reveals a complex body of beliefs surrounding them, which influence social action. These beliefs are somewhat irregular and unsystematic, a man contradicting on one occasion what he said on another, and much reticence is observed about them towards strangers.(1). Such an attitude would be congruent with the notion of conflict between ties through the father and through the mother which figures in Kuruma thought and ritual. As an example of the contradictions which exist, we find widespread the idea that no hamlet can flourish unless all four matriclans are represented in it; yet in about forty hamlets there exists a taboo on intermarriage with one, and in some cases with two, of the four matriclans.

Recruitment is by birth alone, and every Kuruma is born into the clan of his or her biological mother. These clans are non-corporate and non-localised bodies. They have no cult, no Headman, and no association with any clan-god or shrine. Each clan is made up of an indeterminate number of matrigroups, widely dispersed, and of three (sometimes four) generations in depth, readily fissuring as death cuts off the senior members of the group.

1) Save in hamlets acutely divided by accusations of cursing or of sorcery, Kurumas are usually quite ready to reveal their matriclans, but commonly express surprise that their existence is known by a non-Kurumas. They are not eager to discuss them.

The members of a matrigroup co-operate in rites-de-passage, while the clan has no active role; but it provides the society with a sense of depth, of stability, and of continuity. The matrigroup is an ephemeral unit, fissuring in each generation. The permanence of hamlet and of Locality is emphasised, but this permanence is only relative. Every Kuruma knows the name and site of half-a-dozen extinct hamlets in his own neighbourhood, and a sorry tale of how disease or dispute extinguished them. At least four extinct Localities are still remembered in the caste area. Both hamlet and Locality are the venue for strong rivalries and factional groupings, their membership constantly fluctuating as families join or detach themselves. In contrast with this the matriclan, without Headman, property, territory or corporate activity, stands as something permanent, coeval with the caste itself, and ramified through almost every hamlet of the caste.

Two terms are used for matriclan, and one of these also may mean a matrigroup. The proper term for clan, according to Kuruma elders, is kulam (1), but colloquially the word jāthi is used quite as often, in reference to the clan as distinct from a matrigroup or an individual clan member. Jāthi means, literally, a caste or sub-caste, the context making it clear that the speaker is talking of a matriclan. Kulam may be used of a matriclan, especially when talking to non-Kurumas, but generally refers to a matrigroup only; similarly the compound form "kulakāre", or "clansmen", usually refers only to members of such a group, and not of an entire matriclan.

1) This word is used by Nayars for their matriclans; it may therefore have a prestige connotation when used to non-Kurumas. The Sanskritic term vams'am is also occasionally used of a matrigroup by elders claiming a nodding acquaintance with Sanskrit or Tamil, or with literary Malayalam.

Use of the word jāthi for clan, with its connotation of hierarchy, suggests that a ranking system of the four clans exist. This is something on which informants do not agree, and themselves tend to be inconsistent on. Briefly, the clans are not ranked, but certain temperamental characteristics are attributed to them. There may therefore be preferences, though it is doubtful if these extend beyond their verbal assertion.

The clans have each a name; and the order of their ranking, according to one elder of Vilipa clan, is as follows: Venkata, Vilipa, Vadaka, and Kādiva. Venkata is a name of the Sanskritic god Vishnu, and Vadaka means "north"; the other two names seem to have no particular meaning, though Kuruma exegesis sometimes twists a meaning into them. Venkata women, according to this informant (1):

"are perfect in every respect, but the men of the clan are somewhat proud and conceited. Vilipa men are honest, plain, and straightforward, blunt to a fault, and resemble their Vēdan ancestors. They can surmount any obstacle. Vilipa girls however, are very timid. Vadaka people of both sexes are quiet, mild, industrious people."

At this point a listening friend, himself of Venkata clan (2), interrupted:- "Yes, take Totapora Karuppan for instance! He is just such a man!" The informant then continued:

"Kādiva men are foolish and quarrelsome, while the women are scolds and termagants, unchaste and disobedient, ferocious, and even cruel. They must have inherited this trait from their Vēdan ancestress Kāli, who was as fierce as the goddess from whom she was named."

1) Atthiyūr Vullan.
2) Tōtapora Murugan. No doubt Vullan was conscious of the personal implications of what he said, but I have heard similar statements elsewhere. It is widely held that Kādiva is the "worst" of the four clans---except by Kādiva people. It is numerically the smallest of the four.

A further possible reason for this alleged ranking may lie in the origin-stories of the four clans.

These stories form part of the body of legend concerning the conquest and colonisation of Wynad by the Nayars of Kottayam and Kurumbranād. The version given to me on one occasion by the Locality Headman of the Thirty Six hamlets runs:

"Formerly we Kurumas were all Vēdans, and without a clan. After the massacre by the Raja (1), it was discovered that four Vēdan girls had escaped to the jungle. Their lives were saved by the god Pākā dēvam (2) who stood looking on. When he was asked by the pursuing Nayar soldiery whether he had seen any Vēdan girls pass by, he replied that he had only seen four Mullu Kurumāthis, but no Vēdathis. So the girls escaped on that occasion. Later on, they were discovered, and married by four of the Nayars, and they lived on four different ridges (kunnu). All four of the girls were sisters. Soon, the eldest sister bore a son, and the second sister bore a daughter. When the son and daughter were old enough, they were married; and the other two sisters brought ritual bread (pitthe) for the wedding-feast. Eventually all four sisters bore sons and daughters to the Nayars. To prevent incest and confusion, each group of siblings was declared to be of a particular clan (kulam), and this is how our matriclans originated."

Another text runs:

"The four clans are descended from four Nayars, each of whom took a Vēdan girl for wife. For each clan one of the Nayars acted as protector, and when he died, his spirit became the Keliyappan spirit associated with that clan. Venkata clan has Vela Keliyappan, who was a Nalūli, or else Aimangalam Nayar, I can't remember which; Vilipa has Munikillan Keliyappan, who was an Adiyōdi Nayar; Vadaka has Badhinattan Keliyappan, who was Nilanjēri Nayar; and Kādiva has Pudhādi Keliyappan, who was either Aimangalam or Nalūli Nayar."

1) See above, p. 63
2) Pākā dēvam is usually deemed a godling associated with the Pākam locality in North Wynad; but some Kurumas say he is also a Keliyappan, while others identify him with the Kottayam Raja.

The titles of the four Nayars, Adiyōdi and so forth, are kulam-names among the military Nayars of North Malabar. Adiyōdi is also the title of a group of Sāmantans, a royal sub-caste (1). No Nayars entitled to these names could be identified in Wynad at the present day, but Nayar informants assured me that they still existed in coastal Malabar, that they were differentially ranked, and that all were among the very highest sub-castes. Most Kurumas know these four names, and use them in retelling the legend; but one text associated Venkata clan with a Nambiyar, Vilipa with a lower-ranking Nayar, Vadaka with a Kurup, and Kādiva with a Servant Nayar (Puliyan Nāyar), who ranked lowest of the four.

In the second text quoted on the preceding page, each clan is associated with a particular Keliyappan. The informant was Tōtapora Madhira, then a hamlet Headman, and adviser to a Locality Headman. This occasion was the only one on which any Kuruma admitted such an association; and Madhira himself denied it on a subsequent occasion. Yet such an association might seem a reasonable corollary of the legend, in view of the correspondance in number between clans and Keliyappans, and other circumstances. Investigation of rites de passage, during which such an association might expect to be revealed if it were indeed believed to exist, showed that all four Keliyappans were always supposed to be present, and no distinction was made between them. Even the generalised Nayar association of the Keliyappans was sometimes questioned.

1) See Innes, p. 119, and also 121.

The Keliyappans fulfil a double role. As an inseparable group, the undifferentiated "Four Keliyappans" are believed to be immanent in every Kuruma hamlet; even when the four matriclans are not all represented there. They have no separate shrine, but are thought to dwell in the great hut, together with the House-gods and Ancestors. They have a special association with a ceremonial knife, called the knife of the Four Keliyappans. These knives are made by Urāli smiths, and their possession is restricted to Locality Headmen only. They are kept in the roof of the Great hut, and employed during wedding ceremonies as symbols of office.

The Keliyappans are also associated with a temporary shelter or shrine, erected at marriages, and called the Keliyappan pandal. It usually consists of four bamboo uprights supporting a flat roof of palmyra palm leaves, built in the Great courtyard just in front of the Great hut. On to its roof is thrown a twisted length of paddy-straw. It is first erected in a hamlet when ceremonial visiting for a bride begins, and is demolished after ritual bread has been exchanged between the families of bride and groom. It serves to shelter the Headmen and elders at successive stages of the marriage ceremonies; and all four Keliyappans are supposed to be present in it, regardless of the clan-affiliations of bride and groom.

The other role of the Keliyappans (1) differentiates them by association with territory and patrigroups, as House-gods or Locality gods. As House gods, never more than two are represented in a hamlet, and often only a single one of the four. Thus, Tōtapora has two

1) The word Kēliyappan itself means something like Ancestor, or divine father: kēli means fame, story, or play, appan means father.

Keliyappan House-gods; namely Vela (= White) and Pudhādi. The former is the dominant god, and is the maternal uncle of Pudhādi. The latter, the subordinate male god, is the son of the third in this trio of House-gods, the Yellow, or Turmeric Goddess, Manyani Baghavadi. Vela Keliyappan is concerned with the welfare of the men of the hamlet [redacted], his sister with their spouses, and Pudhādi with their sisters and sister's children. It is not very common to find a hamlet having two Keliyappans among the House-gods (Totapora is the only one in that neighbourhood), but it is said that this is the custom of the past, and that the Keliyappans themselves strongly emphasise conformity in their congregation. "Our Keliyappan is very jealous of his prerogatives, and dislikes to see his congregation in bazaar-bought clothing, or even in clean clothing except at festivals. He likes us to be poor and humble."

All the nearby hamlets of the Nochamvayal patrigroup have but one Keliyappan, Pudhādi; and that as subordinate god. The dominant House-god is the Locality deity Kandam Puli, said to have been installed there by the first settlers in place of another god left behind during migration. Kandam Puli is a local territorial god, with a shrine in the local temple and associated with the local Nayar landlord. Nochamvayal regards itself as having been established by this landlord, and has a special association with him in that it provides caste Headmen, whose office was first created by that landlord. Tōtapora does not regard itself as Nayar-established, although its land was the property of this particular Nayar landlord until the Colony was set up in 1947-8. As House-gods, all these

gods are visualised as distinct from the Four Keliyappans as a group.

Just as the Four Keliyappans are supposed to be immanent in every Kuruma hamlet, so it is said that in every hamlet all four clans should be represented. This is "pleasing to the Keliyappans, and so they bless us." In small hamlets of two or three conjugal families only, it is common to find only two or three of the four clans represented at any one time; but this is explained as being only a temporary state of affairs, implying no prohibition on the subsequent acceptance of a member of that clan as wife or stepson. This is so of the hamlets at Nellivayal, and indeed of all those in the eastern part of the caste-occupied territory, and for a long time I assumed that it was everywhere the case. But this is not so.

In about forty hamlets; that is, in about a tenth of the total number, there exist prohibitions on the residence of, or intermarriage with, one or two of the four matriclans. Almost all these hamlets are grouped in the centre of the caste territory, and most are in North Wynad. This distribution can probably be correlated with the tradition that settlements in the east (such as Nochamvayal or Tōtapora) are comparatively recent, the result of migrations from the centre during or after the rebellion of 1800-1805. In the process of migration and settlement, existing prohibitions on a particular clan might well be forgotten, or left behind as a House-god is said to be left behind. The group observing a clan taboo is a patrigroup dispersed through one or more hamlets. The typical migrant group today is a single conjugal family; or according to the founding traditions of established hamlets, two brothers only.

Reticemce, or even secrecy, exists about these prohibitions, especially towards strangers and non-Kurumas. Thus the writer, while traversing the Dodappankolam area, met the Headman of a nearby hamlet going to visit relatives, and walked part of the way with him. Asked about clan prohibitions, the Heddman professed ignorance of them but was able to say that, in his own hamlet at least, they did not exist. Visiting his hamlet before he had returned, the women and male juniors present asserted, with evident sincerity, that in fact both Vadaka and Kādiva clans were prohibited there.

Historical explanations are advanced for such prohibitions; pranks played on a female Headman by young girls of a particular clan, incest, or envy. Thus at Vāravāyal the taboo is attributed to the crime of a stepmother who, from jealousy, tried to poison her husband's children; a situation of conflict common enough among Kurumas today. Part of a text on this runs:-

"....The Headman then took as his second wife a woman of Vilipa clan. She had no children of her own, and hated the two born by her husband's dead first wife. Wishing to kill them, she procured some cobra flesh and roasted it over a fire. When it was cooked she called the children to eat, saying it was a delicacy, the āral (eel), of which they were very fond. But god put it in their minds to share it with their father, and they ran to him to show him what they had been given. He realised what it was, and sent the wicked woman away, swearing that never again should his hamlet take wives from Vilipa clan. And this is still observed today."

The prohibition is primarily on marriage, both into and out of the hamlet observing it. But it has local validity for residence and even for visiting; a visitor of the prohibited clan is likely to

suffer headaches and other inconveniences while he is in the hamlet limits. Atthiyūr Vullan once remarked on this:

"Mundanadupe hamlet prohibit any dealings with Venkata clan, and this was revealed to us when my daughter (Vadaka clan) married a man there. After the wedding my son's wife carried ritual bread to the hamlet. She is of Venkata clan herself, but didn't know anything about the prohibition. She entered the compound with the bundle of bread on her head, and was climbing the steps of the Great hut to take it inside, when it was knocked from her grasp by the overhanging eaves, and thrown into the courtyard. The bundle broke open, and the bread was scattered all about, and the dogs snatched some of it. The elders inquired into so inauspicious a happening, and soon discovered that she was a Venkata woman. This explained the misfortune; the gods were aware of her presence, and showed their anger by throwing out the bread. Such of it as was not spoiled was given to the children to eat, but none was allowed into the Great hut."

The prohibition as such is restricted to a hamlet and its members, but it is believed to affect even those who have severed their relations with it and attached themslves (as stepsons) to other hamlets and other patrigroups. An Avvāl informants said this of the Vilipa taboo observed in his hamlet:

"Long ago, a Vilipa girl was taken by us in marriage, but she bore no children. She pined to see the children of other women playing happily in the nearby stream. At last she resolved to do them an injury, and at night she planted thorns and sharpened sticks in the bed of the stream. Luckily, this was discovered before any harm had been done, but the elders forbade any more girls of her clan to be brought in. The girl herself died when her deed was discovered, and her ghost was not brought into the Great hut, but made to roam the waste as a malignant kothi. Even today, if anyone of Vilipa clan enters our hamlet while we are engaged in some

ceremony involving the gods and Ancestor-spirits, he would be sure to suffer from their anger in some way.

"Inside the hamlet, our gods and Ancestors enforce this prohibition; while outside it, even at a distance, this kothi can cause injury and misfortune. When the father of my (classificatory) brother Narayanan died, he and his mother went away, and the mother remarried. When Narayanan grew up, he claimed his inheritance in that hamlet, and not in ours; and from that hamlet he married a girl of Arumola, who was of Vilipa clan. When we heard this, we sent him warming, but he took no notice. It was the same with Avv:āl Chōman who left our hamlet to settle elsewhere, and at last broke the prohibition by marrying a Vilipa girl of Manalvayal hamlet. We tried to dissuade both men from such marriages, but they would not listen. Now it has turned out that both marriages are barren because of this kothi, and they are weeping, and wishing they had listened to us."

An instance of an attempted break with such a prohibition is provided by the very large hamlet of Ātuvai, containing 35 conjugal families. Two clans were prohibited in this hamlet, which made it very difficult to secure suitable brides for the young men (1). An Ātuvai elder told me:

"We had to scour the whole of Wynad to find a suitable girl for my son, for instead of having the choice of three clans, like most people, we were limited to only one."

About 1950 it was agreed to attempt to end the taboo on one of the two forbidden clans, that of Vilipa. A sum of money was vowed to the House-gods, to be paid after the lapse of a certain time if no misfortune had occurred by then attributable to the change. The hamlet Headman, a widower, then took in marriage a childless widow

1) Spouses must be of a like age, especially in a virgin marriage. Men slightly outnumber women in the caste---see p. 30 This hamlet no longer observes strictly the prohibitions in marrying its girls out to men of other hamlets.

of Vilipa clan, herself past child-bearing. No misfortune occurred that could be blamed to this event; and though the Headman died in June 1955, his widow remains in the hamlet, maintained by her stepson. No virgin girl of this clan has yet been sought as a bride for the hamlet, for this would be a more drastic or "dangerous" step, but after the precedent set by the late Headman it is certain that, "sooner or later", somebody will do so. Similar instances are known of other hamlets ending such a prohibition, sometimes as part of the process of fission within a large patrigroup spread over several hamlets.

No modern instance is known of the imposition of a clan taboo, nor is it possible to date any of the existing ones through the use of genealogies, since these are always of small depth. To be sure, this is no proof that some taboos have not been imposed in recent times: in a small hamlet one clan might, by chance, never have been represented; and this absence then have become institutionalised as a positive prohibition. It seems likely, however, that the number of hamlets observing such taboos is diminishing. There is a marked correlation between the numerical strength of a clan, and the number of hamlets observing a taboo upon it. Kādiva is the smallest clan, its members making up about 16% of the total caste, and it is prohibited in 19 hamlets. Vadaka is the largest, including about 34% of the population, and is prohibited in only one hamlet. Vilipa and Venkata each embrace about 25% of the population, and are prohibited in 13 or 14 hamlets each. The numerical smallness of Kādiva may also perhaps explain its low verbal preference (1).

1) See above, p. 240

Individual Kurumas, when asked why an entire matriclan should be penalised for the fault of an individual member, reply that character is inherited through the mother; and so, if one individual proves wicked, then all his or her matriclansfolk are likely to be so. Or they may answer "such is our custom!", unhelpfully. One interesting point emerges from the texts I collected on this matter. In every case the original offender, or the main offender, is a woman, usually a married woman living in her conjugal hamlet: that is, someone recruited externally who can readily be expelled. The offence is often sexual misconduct or incest; here the woman is the one who initiates misconduct, and action against her is often ~~[illegible]~~ begun by her partner, or her involuntary partner.

Character, and especially vices of character, are generally held to derive from the mother, not the father. The offence is therefore traced out of the hamlet and patrigroup to the matrigroup of the offender. But this is a virtually non-corporate body, of shifting composition, unlocalised, and hard to identify. It is not clearly differentiated from the matriclan, into which it merges. The same term (kulam) describes both. Hence a prohibition upon an offending woman's matrigroup is likely to extend to her whole matriclan. The basis of a hamlet prohibition upon a particular matriclan would seem to be the tension and conflict inherent in relations between the patrilocal group and the matriline. The hamlet can only recruit its members from within the four matriclans, but as a corporate body it is able to select between them.

This explanation is not wholly satisfying. It must be asked why

the prohibition did not apply to the offending woman's hamlet or patrigroup rather than to her matriclan. The question is the more pertinent when it is remarked that in fact a number of prohibitions on marriage between particular hamlets do exist. Thus, upper Nochamvayal hamlet has not intermarried with two hamlets in adjacent Localities since crimes were committed there against Nochamvayal women many years ago. In one case a bride given by Nochamvayal was murdered by her husband; in the other, a girl of Nochamvayal was kidnapped: it is said, while she was passing through that area to a kinsman's hamlet in an effort to escape an epidemic that was ravaging Nochamvayal. Since these events Nochamvayal has banned intermarriage with these hamlets, and her Headmen have vowed money to the House-gods and invoked curses on the offending hamlets. Until the curses are lifted it is dangerous for Nochamvayal juniors even to visit these hamlets. Locality Headmen also impose such prohibitions, affecting all the hamlets of their own Locality as against one particular hamlet elsewhere which they have cursed.

A further possibility is structural change, the clan taboos being regarded as "survivals". Perhaps the four matriclans were once organised in two endogamous pairs, each associated with a particular pair of Keliyappans, a system broken up by the increasing numerical imbalance between the matriclans. Kuruma tradition indeed provides some evidence for such a system, but it is incomplete, and has not been presented. The existence of such a system would not be very surprising. The Todas have a moiety system, and endogamous subdivisions exist among some of the Travancore tribes. But as we

know nothing of Kuruma organisation in 1850 or 1750, further conjecture seems pointless.

The more satisfying explanation seems, then, to be that of conflict between patrilocality and matrilineality. A hamlet consists at any one time of a set of matrilines passing into it in one generation and out of it in the next. The personnel representing these matrilines are also members of other local groups. Action against them can be taken either as members of these groups, or as members of a matriline and representatives of a matriclan. Perhaps the nature of the offence determines whether sanctions are imposed against the local group or the matriclan; and particularly whether clan incest is committed, or some similar offence in which the guilty person is a woman, and particularly a woman seen as a child-bearing agent.

Finally, some mention must be made of a clan-like organisation found in South Wynad, called the Five Father group, or Anchappans. It is an exogamous association of 20 hamlets, while a 21st is now being formed by a migratory group in North Wynad. The total number of living Anchappans can be put at between 450 and 500, some 5% of the total caste strength. A founding Ancestor named Chaduvan (or perhaps Chattovan, meaning Dead man) is remembered, but it is not known how many generations ago he lived, supposing him to have been a real person. He is said to have had five sons born to him by the blessing of the god Kāli mala (1), at Tālūr in South Wynad. As each

1) This god has Urāli and Mysorean connections. The names of the Urali patriclans, "people of three hamlets" and so forth, offer a verbal parallel at least.

son grew up, he quarrelled with his father and went away to found his own separate hamlet. The names of five Anchappan hamlets, now extinct, are remembered; but these are not specifically associated with these sons.

There is no supreme Anchappan Headman, priest, or common shrine. All Anchappan hamlets observe a cult of the god Kāli mala and the godling Guligan, but this is not peculiar to Anchappans or their hamlets. These gods are widely worshipped in South Wynad. Membership is reckoned to be by descent in the male line, but in fact is by birth into an Anchappan hamlet. The son of an Anchappan father may leave his hamlet in youth and perhaps establish himself in another (non-Anchappan) hamlet as the result of his mother's remarriage. Such a man remains an Anchappan, and may not take a wife from an Anchappan hamlet. His sons will be deemed half-Anchappans, or "Anchappan-chōreparisham" as the Kurumas say; and their children will not be regarded as Anchappans at all. On the other hand a non-Anchappan may become an affiliated member of an Anchappan hamlet, as has Atthiyūr Molagan by his mother's remarriage. He is not an Anchappan, but must observe the Anchappan rule of exogamy. His children will be half-Anchappans, and the children of his sons will be full Anchappans.

Patrilateral connections are traced between the various Anchappan hamlets, but these do not co-operate to any greater extent than normal Kuruma hamlets similarly linked, save in more rigid observancex of the rule of exogamy. Other Kurumas discriminate verbally against them, but not (apparently) in practice. They

stress their quarrelsomeness and disunity, attribute unchastity to their women, and laxness in observing caste customs and the authority of Locality Headmen to their menfolk. There seems to be no factual basis for these accusations, and no evidence that there is special reluctance to intermarry with them. Virtues are attributed to them as well as vices; they are said to be "lucky", and to prosper wherever they go. By the favour of the god Kāli mala they reap good harvests, get good hunting, and their wives bear many children. The nemesis that besets them is said to be their quarrelsomeness, which leads to hamlet disunity, fission, and migration away from the hamlet to found new settlements. There is no evidence for this. Anchappan hamlets are neither larger nor smaller than the average; but the greater stability of the group as an exogamous unit paradoxically may give this impression. Few or no non-Anchappan patrigroups retain the memory of their branch connections for so long. Tōtapora, for example, retains the memory of a tie with distant Mottankara, but envisages the possibility of severing that tie by intermarriage. Such severance is not envisaged within the Anchappan association, so the large number of branches perhaps gives some colour to these accusations of adelphic disagreement and instability. But it is the persistence of the group as an exogamous unit that really distinguishes it from other Kuruma patrigroups; and this stability seems to derive from the Anchappan cult of Kali mala as the divine protector of the group (and in one version of the origin-legend, its creator also), and not from any structural variation.

IV iii: The ritual role of the Matrigroup.

The head of a matrigroup, or his representative, plays a a major role in the rites de passage of each of its members, comparable in importance with that of hamlet and Locality Headmen. It is theoretically impossible to be born, to die, or to marry into the caste without the mediation and ritual services of other members of one's matrigroup. In a few instances their services are dispensed with, and minimal forms of the appropriate ceremony undertaken by the residential group alone; but it is understood that these ceremonies are incomplete in themselves, and must sooner or later be completed by the matrigroup after payment of a fine to its senior acting member.

Matrigroups are small, rarely exceeding 20 persons in all, and commonly consist of those individuals with a common living ancestor in the female line. Segmentation and fission occur automatically as the senior members die off. The group might be described as a very shallow matrilineage; but since membership is so small, and ties with segmentary groups quickly forgotten, the term matrigroup has been preferred. The vernacular term for it, as we have already remarked, is identical with that for matriclan----kulam.

The senior living male member is automatically the head of each matrigroup. He is expected to attend and conduct all rites de

passage for members of the group in their own hamlets, or to delegate his authority to some junior member. Delegation is common, especially when the group is large and widely dispersed; and fission may occur in the group even before its senior member is dead. This is so with the matrigroup of Atthiyūr Vullan, which contains about 40 members dispersed over 15 hamlets. He now keeps up relations with members of the group in only four of these hamlets, all within a few miles of Atthiyūr, as he is old and blind, and travels little.

Within the group a distinction exists between Ego's own mother's brothers and classificatory mother's brothers (1), and a preference operates in favour of the former performing certain ceremonies as against a more senior but more distant maternal uncle. On the other hand the services of a uterine brother may be preferred against those of a maternal uncle. For example, when a woman is widowed she may wish to leave her conjugal hamlet or to remain there as a widow with her children. If she is to leave, the question of her future residence and maintenance determines her preference. The obligation to maintain her falls first on her uterine brothers, then on her true maternal uncle, then on her classificatory maternal uncle. She has to be escorted from the hamlet and taken home by one of these, during her husband's funeral ceremonies. Even if she determines to stay, her matrigroup must be represanted, but in that case a senior maternal uncle is likely to attend; a uterine brother or 'own' maternal uncle if she is to leave.

1) The kinship termf for either is amāman or māman, literally "male mother", from amma, mother, plus a masculine ending.

Relations within the matrigroup are formal and distant, especially across a generation and between the sexes. This cross-sex or cross-generation difference marks a difference in residence. A man's sisters leave his hamlet at marriage, and contact thereafter is limited by brief visits by the sisters to their natal hamlet, and return visits by younger brothers only. It would be most unusual for a brother to visit a younger sister unless for the purpose of performing some ceremony, or perhaps to take her back to her natal hamlet as a widow. The pattern of visiting alters as time goes on. A newly-married girl visits her natal hamlet frequently, and often bears her first child there. As her family grows the journey becomes more difficult to make, and more costly for those who have to entertain her. When her parents die and her brothers become her hosts on such visits, their own wives and growing sons will be less effusive; and at this stage visits become very formal, and rarely exceed the customary period of three days.

At the root of this change lies the conflict between matrilineality and patrilocality: and fear by the patrigroup, or members of it, that its wealth and property may be diverted to the female line. This fear is made explicit not by the woman's own brothers but by those who are themselves only marginally members of the patrigroup and hamlet, the sons and wives of the brothers; and, since the hamlet is conscious of its unity as a descent group, by other male members in the brother's generation. The divergence between kānaparrisham and chōreparisham must be emphasised where property and residence are involved. If a sister oustays the customary visit

of three days, jokes are addressed to her brother asking if she has left her husband permanently; while the brother's wife and children may insult or quarrel openly with her. When a man goes to live in his conjugal hamlet it is understood that residence there is temporary, with a view to establishing a separate household nearby.

Occasionally such a move is permanent, often because the wife's father is childless and desires to adopt his daughter's son, or to make him his heir. A decision about this is not personal but collective, for the House gods must be consulted and their approval won. In effect the brothers of the childless man, who would otherwise be his heirs, are given an opportunity to object. Particular circumstances, such as the way in which property is divided and held, affect the decision; but the general principle is that no property regarded as in any way joint can pass to the son-in-law, but only privately-held property. His status ii accepted is that of an exterior member, but his sons, and certainly their sons, acheive full membership.(1).

There is strong resistance to the idea of property, especially landed property, passing out of the hamlet or (as in the case just envisaged) the patrigroup. The gods and Ancestors are believed to keep a jealous eye on this, even when the property be privately held, and in the form of money or chattels. Daughters and wives are the people most likely to carry away property, and when a woman falls ill it is common for her to be accused of having taken or stolen something from her natal hamlet or her conjugal hamlet. This does not apply to a woman's ornaments, which are her personal property,

1) Instances were given in the account of Atthiyur; for PTO

example Chinnan of that hamlet; who migrated to his conjugal hamlet, lived there for about two years, then established himself in a separate property a mile or so away.

nor to the little money she may make by keeping fowls. These she may bestow at will in her lifetime, but whatever she dies possessed of is taken by her husband or her sons. Thus, little or no property passes in the female line.

The conduct of members of a matrigroup towards each other is believed to be sanctioned by a supernatural being called "spirit of the matrigroup (or clan)", the kula-chādi. This is sometimes identified with the subordinate god of a hamlet. It can be invoked by a senior against his junior in a process analogous to cursing within a hamlet. But within a hamlet a curse is said to take effect only by slow degrees, whereas this curse acts very rapidly; "as fast as dry grass burning." It is invoked by mental effort only; no intermediary of Headman, medium, or diviner is needed. Territorial remoteness offers no obstacle to it, but a man who believes himself to be under the curse of his maternal uncle can gain some degree of protection from the dominant god of his own hamlet, provided he remains within the hamlet, and provided Headman, god, and congregation are "united." If there is disunity in the hamlet, the spirit can enter, merging with, and activating, the subordinate deity, which can cause sickness and misfortune. The caste-wide mobility and speedy effect attributed to this spirit, or curse, suggest the mobility and lack of fixed territorial affiliations of the matrigroup and matriclan. An additional sanction enjoyed by the matrigroup elder is his power to refuse his ritual services to a junior member. To do so implies that a curse may also have been directed at the junior.

The nature of these ritual services at a funeral have already been

touched upon. When a man dies, his widow and her children must be ceremonially visited by her brothers or maternal uncle, who offer to carry them away. If the children, particularly the grown-up sons, wish to stay and inherit their father's property, they are prevented from leaving the hamlet. They assemble in the courtyard carrying bow and arrow, with their male mother; the dominant House-god, possessing a medium, then intervenes to take them under his protection, and leads them up the steps into the Great hut (1). They are then entitled to remain in the hamlet as full members of it. The widow, if she intends to remarry, must leave the hamlet. She can remarry only from her natal hamlet or from that of a uterine male mother.

A second matrigroup is involved in the funeral ceremonies; that of the dead man himself. There is no conflict of rights in the children between these two matrigroups, since they belong to that of the mother, and share her matriclan, which will be different from that of their father. Concern in them is shown by the paternal matrigroup during their father's life, but continued after his death only if they are adopted by the dead man's uterine brother. The major interest of this matrigroup lies in the dead man's sister's children, for it is continued through them and not through the dead man. This interest receives expression during the funeral ceremonies by the transmission of one of the dead man's arrows to the eldest son of his eldest uterine sister.

1) This is sometimes carried out even for very senior men who have married from that hamlet, and therefore already have well-establishe -d rights there.

When the corpse is laid in the grave, two arrows are put with it. One of these is then broken in the grave, the flighted end left there, and the iron head handed on to the sister's son. This arrowhead is called the Succession Arrow (andhrambu). The sister's son subsequently attaches it to a new shaft and uses it himself in hunting. It is believed to have a special virtue, the skill of the dead hunter attaching to it, and assuring success in hunting to his nephew.

Arrows are symbols of status among men. At the Ucchār festival a Locality Headman receives a gift of arrowheads from the local Urāli Headman. A Kuruma hunter may receive a gift of arrows from his fellow hunters if he accomplishes some unusual feat, such as killing a tiger, panther, or bear. Possibly the succession arrow is transmitted in this way, broken as it is, to emphasise that property may not descend in the female line, though moral qualities are believed to do so.

A funeral ceremony takes place in three phases, in two of which prominence is given to the dead man's matrigroup, or to its representatives. These perform a dynamic role which contrasts with the relative passivity of the dead man's hamlet-fellows; who seem paralysed, as it were, by the misfortune that has come upon them. This is most evident in the second phase of the ceremony, the removal of death-pollution, five days after the burial itself. The final phase, the induction of the dead man's spirit to the company of Ancestors in the hamlet Great hut, is purely internal to the hamlet.

The initial phase, that of burial (1), involves three groups of people: the members of the hamlet, representatives of the inangu hamlet, and two senior members of the dead man's matrigroup, one male and one female. As soon as the death occurs, men of that hamlet go in pairs to inform the matrikinsfolk, the inangu hamlet, and perhaps also neighbouring and patrilaterally linked hamlets. Those going to the inangu hamlet take with them a knife and a hoe, which they leave at the entrance to the hamlet before announcing the news, and requesting co-operation. As they bear pollution with them, they should not touch anyone, accept food or a sitting mat, or stay to gossip.

The knife and hoe are employed to clear a site in the graveyard, and to dig a grave there. Two men of the inangu hamlet take up these implements and lead the way to the graveyard of the dead man's hamlet (2); where they set to work, helped by two men of that hamlet. Meanwhile the male and female representatives of the dead man's matrigroup go to his hamlet and prepare the corpse for burial. They should be senior members of the matrigroup, and if possible, senior to the dead man himself (3). Uterine brothers would act only in exceptional circumstances. They are, it is true, members of the dead man's matrigroup, but their patrilateral connection with him is felt to inhibit them from acting as matriclansmen.

1) Cremation is sometimes practised, but it is very uncommon.
2) Every hamlet has its own graveyard. Adjacent hamlets with a patrilateral connection may share a common " great graveyard" but each will also have their own private "children's graveyard."
3) A Kuruma thinks of his matrigroup primarily in terms of his seniors within it, and may lament its approaching "extinction."

The task of the male clansman is to prepare the shroud from a length of new unbleached cotton cloth. The shroud is called by the same term as a wedding-cloak, and differs from it only in that it is all white, whereas the wedding cloakk must have a red border. Its cost, and that of the new waistcloth in which the body is dressed, is born by the dead man's heir or heirs. The woman's role is to prepare the intercrural covering (kōn(ag)am), a strip of cloth torn from that used for the shroud. She also makes sandalwood paste to anoint the corpse, and gives a lead to the women of the hamlet in equipping the dead man with food and pān for his long journey; for he is thought of as going on a visit, and is correspondingly equipped, save only that he takes his bow and arrow with him as if leaving the hamlet for good. The body must be washed, anointed with soapnut solution, and finally with vegetable oil and sandal paste. All these preparations are initiated by the matrikin, the man leading the men of the hamlet and the woman the women of the hamlet in effecting them.

Until the corpse is interred, all labour in the hamlets stops, including simple domestic tasks. The fields may not be ploughed nor water drawn from the well. This applies even to non-members of the hamlet, for the death is deemed to have polluted the water, which remains "dirty" until it is baled out after the burial. This is done by the unmarried girls of the hamlet, and the well quickly refills by seepage. At the graveside, betel leaves are taken from the supply allotted to the corpse, distributed and chewed, then spat out as the party return to the hamlet. The mourners should not chew betel

again until the second phase is completed.

This phase begins three, five, or seven days after the burial. The exact day is announced at the graveside just after interment. It is attended by all those present for the first phase, and by others: by more members of the matrigroup---ideally by the entire group---, by more members of the Neighbourhood, and by all members of the hamlet patrigroup, including those who have settled elsewhere, and those women who have married out of it, with their husbands and children. Those who were at the burial have thereby contracted the pollution involved by the death; those who were not present contract it by touching the left leg of any senior member of the dead man's patrigroup, who is already polluted and who is of the same sex as the new arrival.

This phase is known as the "pollution-bath" (pulakuli), or removal of (death) pollution. During it, as also during the first phase, there is marked segregation of the sexes. At the burial rite, all the men conduct the corpse to the graveyard, and all the women must remain together in the hamlet. Between burial and the removal of pollution, women must wear their upper garment in a special way, tied tightly across the breast and under the armpits, instead of hanging loosely round the body, supported by a knot over the left shoulder. Treatment of the corpse also varies with its sex (1).

1) His bow and arrow are buried with a man, a reaping-hook with a woman. The body is set in a recess in one side of the grave, which forms an underground chamber once the grave is filled in. This recess is on the east side for a man, the west for a woman; the head always points to the south. A man is laid on his right side, and therefore faces east, while a woman lies on her left side and faces west. When it is filled in, the maternal uncle sets three small stones in line on top of the grave.

A special oil is set in the courtyard, and the mourners anoint their heads and bodies with it. This is done first by the women, led by women of the matrigroup, one of whom dispenses the oil to them; and next by the men, also led by men of the matrigroup one of whom acts as dispenser. The women then go to bathe in the stream, while the men shave themselves. On their return from the stream the women prepare the funeral feast, while the men in turn go to bathe. With them they take the knife and hoe used in preparing the grave, any ornaments removed from the corpse, and the broken arrowhead of the succession arrow. These are washed in the stream by the senior man of the matrigroup. When he returns with them, he seats himself on the Great hut verandah; and there, after asking permission of the hamlet Headman, he solemnly presents the arrowhead to the dead man's sister's son.

"Once oil is used, pollution begins to go", say the Kurumas. The source of this oil is the Locality Headman, and it is obtained from him by the dead man's heir; but actual distribution of it among the mourners is made by the senior man and woman of the matrigroup. Removal of pollution is completed by bathing in the stream. This, and all other forms of pollution, are described by the word pola, or by various compound forms of it; thus death-pollution is chattha-pola, birth-pollution is petta-pola, and so on. They are persistent states, which can be terminated only by appropriate ceremonies performed by the appropriate kinsmen. Purity is thought of as an activity rather than as a state, and is expressed by some form of the verb nannākuka,

to make pure or good. The notion of purity can be expressed (by the word nanme, or goodness), but in Kuruma thought the state of pollution is opposed, not to a state of purity so much as an act of purification. The incidence of pollution is local; and a death in a hamlet automatically pollutes all residents of the hamlet, but not members of the hamlet living elsewhere. These may take a ceremonial bath on hearing of the event, but this is a demonstration of concern rather than an attempt to remove pollution. Pollution tends to spread outwards to the Neighbourhood and Locality unless removed by customary proceedures.

Non-specific forms of pollution have a constant tendency to attack the individual, and to reassert themselves within the hamlet. Thus a medium, who can enter a state of possession only when in a state of ritual purity, must abstain from sexual intercourse on the night before the seance, and on that day, until the seance is over, he should not eat anything, nor touch a woman. By these means, in addition to a ceremonial bath, the medium maintains himself in a state of ritual purity until the seance. At a funeral, similar prohibitions are observed by all the mourners, from the time of bathing until the House gods of the dead man have been consulted that afternoon through a medium. It is on this occasion that the medium may lead the dead man's sons up into the Great hut, to mark their continued membership of the hamlet. When this has been done, the funeral feast is held.

In these two phases of the funeral ceremonies, the hamlet Headman plays a minor part. He dominates the final phase, which is concerned

with the installation of the dead man's ghost in the hamlet Great hut. At any convenient time after the funeral feast, but usually on the third day after it, the Headman despatches the men to hunt and the women to fish. The latter activity is regarded as the more important of the two, and should be lead by the hamlet Headwoman in person. The fishing is done with winnowing baskets used as scoops; and the first basketful of water scooped up from the bottom of the stream is thrown up onto the bank nearest the hamlet, regardless of whether a fish is caught in it or not. A fish is always deemed to have been caught by this first cast, which is made by the Headwoman or a senior wife delegated by her; and this fish is identified with the spirit (prēdam) of the dead man.

The fish and game caught during the day are cooked in the Great hut, and offered to the Ancestors by the Headman. A new plate is set for the newly inducted spirit. The offerings and the rest of the food are then distributed among the members of the hamlet. The matrikin play no part in this ceremony; indeed they should have already left the hamlet. I was told that it is incumbent on each husband to perform his conjugal duties that night, whereas the presence of matrikin, and especially the maternal uncle, inhibits such a thing; and indeed any demonstration suggestive of a sexual relationship is frowned on in his presence.

The relations of the hamlet with the matrikin of its members are exhibited most dramatically at marriage; or rather, since there are several forms of marriage, at the preferred form that marks a first marriage. This is called kanyakalyānam, or Virgin marriage.

The ceremony marks an alliance between two hamlets, the significance of which extends to other branches of the patrigroup in other hamlets. It marks a change of status in bride and groom, and affirms their membership of a single particular hamlet and patrigroup; and it involves the matrikin of the bride and groom, which must supply representatives to conduct the ceremonial that marks this change in status.

Economically, the groom's father is the principal figure; since he bears the greater part of the cost of the ceremony. This may amount to between 200 and 400 rupees (£15 to £30). He must provide the wedding feast in his own hamlet, and also the brideprice which may exceed Rs 100. He and the bride's father must reach a private agreement on the exact amount, and when it is to be paid. At least half of it, and usually the entire sum, is paid before the ceremony, and in cash.

In theory this money meets the cost of the bride's ornaments and the wedding feast in her hamlet. The cost of these ornaments is about Rs 50; but some fathers buy additional ornaments, and meet the extra cost from their own pockets. Others skimp the expense in order to divert part of the brideprice to their own purposes, but this is regarded as a shameful thing.(1). Reticence over the amount of the brideprice and actual expenditure make such diversion not too difficult. A generous father may give his daughter a small dowry of household articles, or even a female calf; this remains

1) The basic ornaments of a bride are gold ear-rings and a silver armlet. Optional extras include silver wristlets and rings and a gold locket (tāli). Most brides wear these extras, but they are usually borrowed for the occasion.

the bride's property though, if divorce should follow, the husband may challenge her ownership. But possession of the ornaments is never challenged.

The groom's father must find and select the bride. This he does on the basis of information provided by his network of kinship relations, often going very far afield to find a suitable girl. Indeed distance itself is an important consideration; the bride's hamlet should not be too close to that of the groom. Once a choice is made and agreement reached over timing and the amount of the brideprice, the father's role is subordinated to that of his hamlet Headman, the Locality Headman, and the maternal uncle representing the matrigroup of the prospective spouse.

The father makes three visits, once he has decided on a girl. On the first he concludes an informal agreement with her father. On the second he is presented to her hamlet Headman as a "bride-seekr." On the third he is accompanied by his Go-between, or Third Man (mūnāman)(1). The Third man wears emblems of his role, and is drawn from the groom's inangu hamlet. On this visit the groom's father pays earnest-money (odhakapanam) of Re 1 to the bride's hamlet Headman, who publicly announces the coming wedding.

When the "bride-seekers" have left, the girl's House-gods are consulted, and the rupee offered them. Its acceptance, preceeded by a little informal discussion, implies that the marriage is deemed

1) This term is often abbreviated to mūnān, mūn meaning 'three'. He represents the groom's Locality Headman, who invests him with his emblems of office. He should not be of the groom's matrigroup, but his clan affiliation is irrelevant. His role is further discussed below.

to be approved by the gods. In theory they can refuse to accept it, when the marriage would have to be abandoned, but no instance of this happening could be discovered. Any bar of kinship would be elucidated in the preliminary discussions. I was told that an elder would sometimes raise an objection, but rather to embarrass the father or display his own expertise in caste custom and genealogical knowledge than with the intention of stopping the marriage.

At this stage, control of the ceremony shifts to others: to the Locality Headmen of bride and groom, and to their matrigroup elders. Of the latter, the main role is played by a senior and a junior maternal uncle, or by a maternal uncle and a uterine brother of the bride or groom. When the bride is invested with her ornaments in her paternal Great hut (in fact, on the front verandah) the senior maternal uncle may put the bridal ear-ring in the girl's right ear, but will ask a junior to put in the left one. At this ceremony the Locality Headman must either attend in person, or send a representative. In a large Locality during the season of marriages it is often essential that he be represented by proxy, as there are so many calls upon him. The proxy is normally one of his immediate successors to the office.

The consent of the Locality Headman is a pre-requisite for any Virgin marriage. It is desirable for the lesser forms of marriage; but for these, and for concubinage, it is possible to dispense with his services at the time, and regularise the union later by a payment of money to him in the form of a fine. A Headman can withold his consent to a marriage if it conflicts with his own policies towards

particular hamlets or Localities. To give instances of this: some forty years ago the men of Edūr Nellikandam hamlet, in Edūr Locality, are said to have carried off a girl of Nochamvayal in the Thirty Six Locality. Since then the Thirty Six Headman has refused to allow intermarriage. At first the ban applied to the whole Locality of Edūr, but has now been restricted to Nellikandam and its branch hamlets only; and elders on both sides now wish to end the ban altogether. The Edūr Locality Headman is one of the high caste Headmen, or Thalachils, and the Thirty Six is nominally subject to his control. Its Headman now claims parity of status with him, or professes to do so (1), and his persistent refusal to allow intermarriage is related to this claim. I therefore describe the ban as the Headman's "policy", or a facet of it.

The second instance concerns a reeent refusal by the Thirty Six Headman to allow intermarriage between his Locality and that of Meppād in North Wynad. This ban was imposed for personal reasons. The Headman's only son married a girl of Meppād, who left him after bearing a son on what was deemed a frivolous reason. The Headman's son was deeply upset by his loss, and his father tried to enforce the girl's return by refusing to accept return of the ritual brideprice; that is, by refusing to allow her a divorce. He insisted that her father should return her and her child to his son. When this appeal was ignored, he imposed a ban on all further marriages between the two Localities. This prohibition was made in or soon after 1940. The son is now insane. The effectiveness of the ban is

1) The claim is made verbally; but is not fully acted on. The Edur Thalachil can perform occasional functions which the ordinary Locality Headman cannot. These concern caste excommunication.

diminished by the open opposition to it of the Headman's successors. The Headman himself regards the ban as embracing all Meppād Locality; his juniors limit its operation to the patrigroup concerned, i.e. that of the Meppād girl, and are prepared to act in marriage within the Locality but outside that patrigroup.

On the appointed day the bride is fetched home to her prospective conjugal hamlet by a party of both sexes. It consists of the groom, the Third Man and two male assistants, a man and woman called the "bearers of cloth and cash", and a number of unmarried girls from hamlets in the groom's neighbourhood. The "bearer of cash" (kānam) is the principal officer of the party, and represents the Locality Headman. When the party set out, he was invested by the Locality Headman and others with certain emblems, including the ceremonial portion of the brideprice, called kanam, or kānapanam; literally, "sight-money."

This investiture takes place at the groom's paternal hamlet, partly in the Great hut, and partly in the marriage shelter or pandal of the four Keliyappans, which has already been described (1). The Locality Headman, the groom's hamlet Headman, and other elders of his hamlet and neighbourhood, seat themselves in the shelter. The groom's matrikin occupy the Great hut, and here they equip the groom for his journey. The hamlet Headman in the pandal then orders the groomsmen to make ready, and himself assists them. The cash-bearer and the Third Man and his two aides must all wear red sashes, and gold ear-rings of a particular type, worn only on such occasions (2). He

1) See above, p. 243
2) The Third Man, having visited the bride's hamlet, will already be equipped.

hands the ceremonial brideprice to the Locality Headman, who examines it, then wraps it in a black sash, which he hands to the groom's maternal uncle. The latter, followed by all four groomsmen, enters the Great hut with it, and ties it round the waist of the cash-bearer. Also in the Great hut at this time are the married women of the hamlet, engaged in preparations for the wedding feast under the direction of the female Headman, the groom, and the woman cloth-bearer. The latter must always be of the groom's own matriclan, and is preferably his uterine sister. She must also be a married woman, and her husband acts as the cash-bearer. The female Headman sees that everything is in order, the party anointed with oil, and gives them instructions about route and timing. They set off, leaving the Great hut by the Small door, and hurry to the limits of the hamlet gardens. Here they wait for the Cash-bearer for a moment, who must be further equipped by the Locality Headman. While they wait, they are joined by the young girls who will make up the party.

The Cash-bearer, equipped with his two sashes and the ceremonial brideprice, returns to the pandal, where he is given the last emblem of his office. It is the ceremonial knife known as the knife of the four Keliyappans. During the entire journey, he must carry it naked in his right hand. It is the emblem of the Keliyappans, and also of the Locality Headman who gave it him. Until he surrenders it again to that Headman, on the day after his return, he takes precedence in ceremonial matters (such as the giving of food) even over the Headman he represents. (1).

1) Some Kuruma exegetists say that this is "wrong"; admitting it to be the custom, they argue for immediate loss of precedence on return

The ceremonial brideprice carried by the Cash-bearer consists of five one-rupee coins, and two small gold coins (panam, pudhupanam), each with a nominal value of four annas. The rupee coins are the modern nickel ones, but ideally they should be silver ones bearing "the old Queen's head", i.e. Victorian silver rupees. Nickel coins are now always used, but paper coinage is not accepted as ceremonial brideprice. The gold coins are still employed today, though they do not form part of the currency. At only one wedding of the many I was able to attend were nickel pieces substituted for them, and the elders were strongly critical of this innovation.

The ceremonial brideprice is provided by the groom's father, but is quite distinct from the brideprice which he privately pays the father of the bride. It is transmitted ceremonially in the manner we have described, and carried by the Cash-bearer to the bride's hamlet, where he hands it over in the Great hut to her maternal uncle. He removes it from the black sash and carries it out to the bride's hamlet and Locality Headmen, who are also seated in a Keliyappan pandal in the courtyard. These examine it carefully (1), and return it to him. Subsequently, he gives it to the girl's father, who returns him one gold coin, keeps the other himself, and puts the five rupees into the sacred cash-box at the next seance. It must be returned if the wife is sent away, or leaves her husband; but the non-ceremonial brideprice is returnable only if the wife leaves her husband without proper justification. Return of the ceremonial

1) It is jestingly said in Kerala, that illicit coining is one of the major cottage industries there.

brideprice marks the recognition of divorce, and though a woman can enter concubinage before getting a divorce, she cannot remarry. This is the case with the Meppād girl mentioned above. She has entered into a concubinage, and now is anxious to get a divorce so that the position of her children in the hamlet can be regularised. Until Nochamvayal [illegible] accepts return of the brideprice, no new payment in respect of her procreative capacity can be made.

Supposing a woman to be widowed, the ritual brideprice is not usually repaid, whether she she stays in the hamlet as a widow, or returns home to remarry. If she remarries, a further ritual brideprice is paid, but it is reduced in amount to four ruppes only ---and to three for a second remarriage, and so on, down to one rupee. Thus the woman's natal hamlet may hold in its cashbox money in respect of rights in her from a number of different hamlets at once. In any one of these the children have potential rights of membership. Their selection, as we have explained, is normally made at the time of their first marriage. The sacred cashbox thus represents not only the history of a hamlet, but also the history, status and rights of its individual members and their closest kin. Money comes in in respect of sisters and chōreparisham kin; goes out [illegible] as kānapanam to bring in wives and so continue the hamlet through kānaparisham. The Headman is the accountant in respect of all these payments, and the contents of the box are in his care.

Supernatural danger is peculiarly liable during a wedding. It is held to threaten men more than women, and the groom most of all. On the journey to and from the bride's hamlet he is partially

disguised as a woman; he keeps close to the women of the party, and hangs down his head, like a modest girl. When he reaches the bridal hamlet he must lie down on the Great-hut veramdah behind the seated Cash-bearer, so that he is concealed from view. His reactions to his status are not purely ceremonial, and he is plainly the victim of very great tensions. He is liable to faint, or to bleed at the nose and mouth, or to enter a state of silent "possession" by a "spirit." These things are most liable to happen while he is in the bride's hamlet; and I have myself witnessed grooms in such states. If this happens, the bride's hamlet and Locality Headmen immediately enter the Great hut, expelling from thence the bride's matrikin, and consult the dominant god of the hamlet through a medium. They vow money to this god, to make him bring the "spirit" under control; and the ceremony is held up (never for very long), until the god gives a satisfactory explanation of the event, and the groom has recovered.(1).

No such danger seems to threaten the bride. The principal concern of the ceremony, apart from that intended to mark her new status, and entry to a new hamlet, seems to be that she shall not carry any property from her natal to her conjugal hamlet unless it has been provided by the groom's party or by her maternal uncles, such as her ornaments (these, of course, were paid for by her father, but are put on by her matrikin). She is handed over in the Great hut

1) These attacks never seem serious or long-continued. But it may be interesting to refer here to the remarkable insanity (presumably some form of hysteria) which affected the sister's son of my Kuruma landlord Veliyan. This youth, born about 1933, was naturally intelligent and cheerful. He married on three occasions: in 1952, in 1953, and in 1955. On every occasion he became insane

(or hysterical) on the morning after the marriage ceremony, and this state continued without intermission for the next fortnight or longer. In each case, the bride left him after three of four days of marriage, and was divorced. The first two onsets were diagnosed as demonic possession by the Kurumas, but he is now regarded as mad.

by her maternal uncle to the Cash-bearer and Cloth-bearer. The latter removes her outer clothing and replaces it with clothing which she herself has brought. Commenting on this, the Kurumas say that her House-gods would follow her if any property were taken with her from that hamlet, and the subordinate god might establish himself in the groom's hamlet. This possibility is prevented by a number of rites. The dowry which a bride may bring is not transferred to her conjugal hamlet until the intervisiting ceremonies that follow the marriage are concluded.

The status change in the bride, and the difference in status between the giving and receiving hamlets, are dramatised in numerous ways. The bride is fetched by the groom, by the representative of his inangus the Third Man, and by the representative of his Locality Headman, the Cash-bearer. When the bride leaves her natal Great hut she does so through the Small door, "descending three steps", but enters that of the groom through the Great door, "going up four." Reference has already been made to the terms "great link" and "small link," as applied to a marriage alliance.

The last phase of a marriage ceremony consists of ceremonial visiting, and the exchange of ritual food. The food is muffin-like rice-cakes smeared with ghi, and referred to as "family ritual bread", parisha-pitthe (1). That from the groom's hamlet is always sent first, and must consist of an odd number of cakes. It is carried by a young woman married to one of the groom's

1) Parisham may mean a family, but it rather connotes a kinship or affinal connection. Perhaps "affines family bread" would be a closer rendering. The term is commonly abbreviated to "pitthe."

hamlet brothers, who accompanies bride and groom on their first visit to the bride's natal hamlet, on the third day after the marriage. They stay there two days, and return on the third, escorted by a woman of the bride's hamlet bearing a similer bundle of bakes, but containing rather less than was sent them, and always an even number.

When the food reaches its destination, the bundle must be unwrapped in the Great hut by the maternal uncle of that spouse. Some is distributed at once to the children, but the greater part is kept and offered to the Ancestors that night, then eaten by the adults of the hamlet. These cakes are always counted in pairs, and also packed in pairs, the ghi-smeared faces being turned inwards to each other (1). Of such an exchange in 1955, after a marriage between a girl of Atthiyūr (upper hamlet) and Valiyakolli hamlet, the bride's mother remarked:

"From Atthiyūr we sent 50 pairs (literally "yokes", as of cattle) to Valiyakolli with Kāmāchi (the bride). These were all in the bigger bundle, with another 35 single cakes in the smaller bundle (2). These latter we offer to any Kuruma met on the journey, and the bride and groom both offer him betel and areca, to placate him and gain his blessing. Valiyakolli sent us 50 pairs and an odd one. Five of these were without ghi, and packed separately. We always leave a few without any ghi, lest some Ancestor is known to dislike it."

Ritual respect is shown to the "bigger" bundle of cakes, wrapped in a white cloth, and called Head-cakes (thalapitthe); this bundle must

1) From obscene talk, common and even open at weddings, it appears that ghi, or clarified butter, is equated with the seminal fluid.

2) The smaller bundle contains cakes intended for casual distribution to chance-met Kurumas on the journey. Any cakes left in it at the end of the journey are given to the children to eat.

be carried on the head, and not set upon the earth even for a moment until it is put down in the Great hut. The smaller bundle contains "Pleasure cakes" (madhupitthe) for general distribution, and is not accorded this ritual respect.

This exchange of ceremonial food takes place not only between the living members of the two hamlets, but between them as patrigroups. The Ancestors are offered the cakes before they are eaten; and a token number are also sent to any branch hamlet of the same patrigroup, and to the inangu hamlet. This is done when the cakes have reached their destination. Before they were sent off from the hamlet where they were made, a single pair of cakes was removed from the bundle by the spouse of that hamlet, and given to the hamlet Headman, who offers them to the Ancestors there. Thus the Ancestors on both sides, and those of the inangu hamlet, share in the commensality which the new alliance implies. A failure to share the cakes out among branch hamlets implies a threatened fission of the link between them. Thus at Nellivayal Nochamvayal and Kālambilau no longer share in this way.

This description of the highly elaborate Kuruma marriage ceremonies is necessarily a summary one, on which we shall elaborate further. It is sufficiently full, it is hoped, to clarify the role of the matrigroup and maternal uncle in effecting a cnucial change of status in one of its members. This change marks the acheivement of manhood or womanhood. It does not of itself confer membership of a hamlet, but this is implicit in the performance of the ceremonies in the paternal hamlet.

It may be objected that what has been called "the role of the matrigroup" is in fact the role of the maternal uncle alone. This is not really so, although it is true that the matrigroup of an individual is hardly ever present in all its numbers at any one ceremony involving a change in his status. The term maternal uncle, or male mother describes every male member of the group who is of a generation senior to that of Ego. Men of the mother's mother's generation may be distinguished by the affix "great" (valiya), in the form valiyamāman. The seniormost living male in the group is called the Matriclan Elder (kulathil kāranan), regardless of his generation, and he ought always to be informed of any ceremony involving the matrigroup, and invited to perform it. Since the services of a true maternal uncle are usually preferred by the subject of the ceremony, this invitation may be understood to imply that he will permit the delegation of his authority. Roles may be distributed between several different members of the group. Their attendance is always by invitation and not of right; and selective invitation may cause ill-feeling and assist in the fission that is continually taking place in the group.

The central complex of wedding ceremonies extends over four days, and previous references to the "wedding day" have in fact been to the third of these four---the "bride-giving", or "bride-taking" day. The first day of the four is always Monday or Friday. Monday has associations with the moon, with menstruation, and hence with women; Friday is associated with the goddess Bhagavadi. On

this day (Affines' day) close relatives arrive, including members of the matrigroup, and assist with the active preparations for the wedding. The second day is that of Neighbourhood assembly, when members of the inangu and other adjacent hamlets assemble. The third day is that of Bride-giving (or taking), and the fourth is Dispersal day---for the affines and matrikin: these alone are accomodated overnight in the hamlet. The maternal uncle performs important roles on the second and third days; on the night of the second day he, assisted by other members of the matrigroup, put the ornaments emblematic of marriage and maturity on the sister's son (or daughter); on the third day he despatches (or accepts) the ceremonial brideprice, and receives (or despatches) the bride. All these ceremonies he performs inside the Great hut, or on its front verandah in view of the hamlet congregation and other guests, grouped in the courtyard and under the Keliyappan shelter.

It was suggested earlier in the chapter that there might be an association between the four Keliyappans and the four matriclans. The Kurumas deny this; they strongly deny the existence of a tie between a particular matriclan and a particular Keliyappan, and are doubtful whether there may be a general association between them.

In the symbolic drama of the marriage ceremony the four Keliyappans ---divine beings without a permanent shrine, or priest, or cult, or any territorial association, immanent over the total caste territory, are suddenly localised in the temporary shrine or Keliyappan shelter where the hamlet and Locality Headmen sit. The Keliyappans are said to be under the control of the Locality Headman:

"he holds them under his armpit" as the Kurumas say; and the emblem of office with which he equips the Cash-bearer is called the knife of the Keliyappans. The place where this is done, and where these Headmen sit during the ceremony, is not in the Great hut but in the Keliyappan shelter.

The maternal uncle, head or representative of the matrigroup, must perform his ceremonial role in and from the Great hut of the hamlet. The adorning of the bride or groom he performs, as we have seen, on the front verandah of the Great hut. The transfer of the ritual brideprice and handing over of the bride take place inside the Great hut. As in the funeral ceremony, it is possible to distinguish a dynamic and a static element here, the territorial group and the matriline respectively. Rights in land and property are held from the former, but the recruitment of new members; and in this particular case the transfer of ofx a woman and her working and reproductive capacity, involve the bringing in of a new matriline. Bringing in or sending out a bride alike demand the ritual services and consent of her matrigroup and its representative. The transfer takes place in the Great hut, the central point and symbol of identity, of the minor territorial unit concerned; the hamlet. It is done by consent of the House gods and Ancestors, and in their shrine.

But wider affiliations are concerned. The matrigroup is only one articulation of the wider matriclan, and the hamlet is a member of a wider territorial grouping, the Locality. These converge in the office of the Locality Headman, who controls the Locality in the

sense that he can confer membership on an immigrant, or deprive an offender against caste rules of membership; and who also controls the matriclans in a negative sense. He "holds them under his armpit" is said of the four Keliyappans, but this we can take to refer to the matriclans, or to an aspect of them. He controls their movement in his territory, in that he can permit or refuse to sanction a particular marriage.

The dual role of the Keliyappans in some hamlets has been remarked on; they may act as House-gods in addition to their role at marriage as a fourfold spirit, or four associated spirits. The establishment of a Keliyappan pandal in such a hamlet (Tōtapora for example) emphasises this duality. The dominant House-god is Vela Keliyappan and the subordinate god Pudhādi Keliyappan. These remain in the Great hut as House-gods during a wedding ceremony, but as a pair of the four Keliyappans they simultaneously fulfil another role, for all four Keliyappans are thought of as being present in the Keliyappan pandal, established for the Locality Headman.

The Locality Headman fulfils no ritual role apart from giving permission for a marriage (and sending his Keliyappan knife in sign of that permission) and attending the crisis of the ceremony on the third day. That role is performed by the maternal uncle, who acts for a particular matrigroup, and so indirectly for one particular matriclan. He is "the untier of his matriclan". The image of "untying" comes from his role of undoing the knot that holds together the bundle that the ritual cakes are brought in. In a hamlet where

one of the four matriclans is unrepresentedm, perhaps because of a clan prohibition, the inhabitants say: "No, that matriclan has not yet been untied here." The rice-cakes which the maternal uncle unties represent not merely an exchange of food between two patrigroups, but have a secondary sexual significance; as appears from Kuruma jokes and comments on the subject, as well as the pairing of the cakes with their ghi-smeared surfaces inwards. The action of untying the bundle therefore seems to look forward to the birth of children, through whom the matriclan of the uncle will be established in a new hamlet. A like emphasis on continuity appears in the transmission of the Succession arrow during a funeral ceremony.

Hamlet, Locality, and matrigroup or matriclan represent different organising principles. Rites de passage, and particularly that of marriage, focus and dramatise their potentially conflicting interests. Kurumas are well aware of the strong tensions underlying the mobilisation of these groups (or their representatives) for the ceremony, though they express these tensions in terms of supernatural danger and intervention. As we have said, hysterical or other attacks are not uncommon in the groom's party during the journey to and from the bride's hamlet, or at that hamlet. These attacks they explain in terms of divine dissatisfaction with some aspect of the marriage, or the conduct of its ceremonial, and deal with by threatening or placating the dominant god of the hamlet.

The locus of tension is the hamlet itself. It is here that matriline and patrilocal group converge. This convergence seems to be represented in the institution of the Great hut with its associated symbols and divine beings. The Ancestors represent the static aspect of the patrigroup, whereas the House gods are more concerned with recruitment, membership, and external relations through matrikin. Decisions are continually having to be taken about these things, and the onus of decision is placed upon the gods, not the Ancestors. In only a few hamlets are the latter ever consulted through a medium, and then in a formal manner at the Ucchār ceremony and not about specific problems.

The House-gods are typically three in number, each with a specific role. One is the dominant male god, always addressed (by the hamlet Headman) as "father"; one the subordinate male god, addressed as "elder brother"; and one the hamlet goddess, addressed as "mother". This is the case even in hamlets like Tōtapora where, as Keliyappans, the male gods are said to stand to each other in the relation of maṯrnal uncle to sister's son. This relationship does not necessarily contradict that implied by the use of the kinship terms of address, since the sister's son is also "brother"; but it implies a duality of role in the subordinate god. The son inherits and is a resident member; the sister's son does not inherit, and should not be a resident member of the hamlet.

This seems to tie in with the character and function attributed to the god. The dominant god is associated with the Headman; the subordinate god with the juniors. At the same time the subordinate

god is concerned with women given in marriage from the hamlet, and their children. These retain an honorary membership of the hamlet, and can return there for shelter, but not for inheritance. The sisters are members of their natal patrigroup still, but the children are not: at this point patrigroup and matriline divide, and it is at this point that "disorder" threatens the hamlet. The control exercised by the corporate patrilocal group over the dispersed matriline is represented in the dominance of the dominant god over the subordinate god. In each succeeding generation a fresh dispersal of the matriline is enforced by the practise of hamlet exogamy.

But this is only one aspect of the cult of the House-gods. The dominant god in particular is concerned with territory, with the hamlet gardens and paddyfields. In many cases he is a territorial god in the sense that he is worshipped throughout the village or Locality, and associated with its soil, and with the Nayar or other lord of that soil. Kandam Puli, the Atthiyūr god, is worshipped throughout the Nellivayal area, and is said to have been "given" to the hamlet when it was first established by the Nayar landlord of Nellivayal. He is also the god of the caste Locality and its Headman. Paniya serfs or labourers who till the soil of a particular hamlet regard themselves as partly under the protection of the dominant god of that hamlet, and make a small cash offering to him through their employer at the Ucchār festival. He therefore may be said to preside over intercaste links that exist in relation to the hamlet and its lands.

The role of money in the cult of the House-gods is very important. While the Ancestors are offered food alone, the House-gods are offered either money or costly ornaments in the form of gold rings and armlets. A money-payment marks most of the major external relations of a hamlet and its members. Money is given for a bride. The Locality Headman is paid in cash for ritual services, as also is the village washerman who supplies mattu after childbirth. The janmi was traditionally paid in paddy, but a money payment was made to him when a caste office such as that of Locality Headman is established by him, or when it changes hands. Money fines are levied in expiation of certain offences, and an individual who desires to acheive some particular end may vow a money payment to his House-god. At almost every point money marks the links of the hamlet and its members with the outside world. The manipulation of debt and credit in terms of money are among the chief problems facing a Kuruma in the modern world of secular relations, and this too seems to be reflected in the cult of the House-gods.

Besides periodic and contingent paymemts and conditional vows of money to the gods, they are consulted through shamanistic Kuruma mediums. These consultations are often marked by a high level of tension among the congregation, who mingle threats and legalistic arguments with vows and submissive prayers . Two rhetorical questions are asked of the Headman by the god at almost every seance: firstly "Are you united or disunited?" and,

when a complaint of misconduct or misfortune is made: "Is it due to chōreparisham or to kānaparisham?" i.e. do you attribute it to your sisters, their husbands and their sons; or to your wives, their brothers and their sons? Thus the source of misfortune tends to be looked for outside the hamlet rather than inside.

The source of anxiety or disagreement is very often some mobile form of property. A man may privately assist his sister or her sons with money, which his own wife and sons resent; or conversely if he refuses a request for assistance, his sister and her sons may resent it. Cattle are also subject to this kind of competition, especially in areas where pasture is so restricted that dispersion of all animals not immediately needed is necessary. A man may disperse his cattle among affines, whose labour in herding them is compensated by the free use of their milk, dung, and labour. Alternatively he may call upon his sister's younger sons to help him with the herding. In either case the person doing the herding will feel he has established a claim upon some of the animals; a claim which the owner's brothers or sons are sure to resist later. And if they themselves are without cattle they may condemn the owner for passing the cattle to an affine in preference to themselves.

Looked at in these terms, the potential instability of the hamlet is clear. It appears as a collectivity of conjugal families, competing against each other and against the familes of their brothers or sisters. But the hamlet Ancestor-cult

gives it stability and continuity. While the personnel of the hamlet is renewed by the bringing in of women and their sons, the internal structuring of the patrigroup---essentially its division by generations and into segments---is validated by the ordering of the Ancestors and their cult.

The cults of gods and of Ancestors supplement each other. We have explained how the gods are consulted at those occasions when questions of hamlet residence, patrigroup membership and succession arise. They are as it were the filter through which prospective members pass. The last stage in this process is when a man becomes the most senior male in the patrigroup, and succeeds to the Headmanship. The dominant god is then consulted through a medium, and takes the prospective Headman by the hand and leads him into the Great hut. His position in hamlet and patrigroup are then at the maximumof security; so secure that the Headman may identify himself with the dominant god he serves. In face to face relations with the god-possessed medium he addresses him as "father"; but in informal discussion about proceedural questions a Headman may dismiss points of view other than his own with the assertion: "I am god, am I not?" This identification, hubristic or blasphemous though it may saund to Western ears, is not merely an assertion of authority, but a statement that the speaker has passed beyond the stage of choice, beyond the possibility of rejection from membership, and is himself about to join the Ancestors.

In chapter III it was mentioned that the Headman, as priest of the Ancestors, controlled the ceremony of induction, and might expel a spirit (pēna) already inducted. In Atthiyūr, Vullan

has refused to induct the spirit of Kēsavan, and is suspected of having expelled that of Vulli. In Tōtapora Murugan, when he became Headman, confided to me that he had expelled the spirit of his ehemy Kēlan. The instability of hamlet membership seems also to extend to the Ancestors. But in these three cases we must remark that Vullan was the senior of both Kēsavan and Vulli; and that though Kēlan was Murugan's senion, both were of the same generation. Moreover we must distimguish between a refusal to induct, which is something capable of being checked on, and the alleged expulsion of an inducted spirit. The latter is done secretly by the Headman, and only he himself can say whether it has been done or not. It is done by failing to set food for a particular Ancestor, or by setting food and the throwing it out of the Small door in secret. No-one can be sure whether it has been done or not; and the next Headman will presumably set food for that Ancestor in the normal way. It is therefore rather a refusal to offer food than an expulsion.

An expelled Ancestor or unhoused ghost is throught to become a malignant spirit (kothi), kept outside the hamlet by the power of the dominant god. Where there is hamlet disunity, the kothi may enter the hamlet and inflict injury on the inhabitants. It is thought to do so by merging with, or activating, the subordinate god, which itself may be regarded as a kothi if out of the control of the dominant god. This situation is the last possible stage of election to or rejection from membership of the patrigroup and hamlet. It is as if a sister's son were making a last claim to membership, to be finally expelled when unity is reacheived.

Chapter V: The Locality.

V i: The Locality and its Headman.

Most of what has been said in the last two chapters about the Kuruma hamlet suggests an isolated self-operating tribal community. It remains now to correct that impression and to link up this exclusively Kuruma material with the wider society of Wynad and Malabar. This will be done in the process of describing the major political unit of Kuruma society, the Locality. It is through this unit that Kuruma hamlets and individuals are tied into the traditional regional caste system. It is true that this system today appears moribund; other status systems have arisen as a result of recent economic change, State intervention, and immigration; and Kurumas enter these systems as individuals or through membership of groups other than Localities. Nonetheless, the Locality remains a unit of primary importance in controlling social behaviour among the Kurumas.

At the present day the Kurumas are organised into about twenty Localities. They could accurately be described as caste villages, but the term Locality (rendered throughout with an initial capital letter) has been preferred as a closer rendering of the vernacular equivalents---ridge (kunnu) or region (nādu). It also prevents possible confusion with the term intercaste village (dēsam). In some cases a Locality is roughly coterminous with an intercaste village, but in others it extends across two or three of them, and in yet others more than one Locality

may coexist within a single such village. The smallest Locality covers about 2 square miles, and the largest about 50. Most or all of the other castes have similar territorial units, but their boundaries do not necessarily coincide with each other, or those of these Localities. In general, the lower the ranking of a caste, the smaller its territorial units. Those of the Urālis are about half the size of a Kuruma Locality.

Each Locality acknowledges a single Headman, drawn from a particular hamlet in that Locality. Succession to the office goes by adelphic seniority within the patrigroup, and the Headman is himself automatically also the Headman of his hamlet. Where the patrigroup has established branches in one or more hamlets the succession may be contested between them, as has happened at Nellivayal, but tradition says that such disputes were rare in the past, as any dispute was settled by the local Nayar landlord who had established the office. In general, succession was restricted to a single hamlet; or (more rarely) to a patrigroup in two or more hamlets, the Headman having to reside in one particular hamlet.

Erumāth Locality in South Wynad (now in Nilgiri District) provides an instance. The Headman's patrigroup extends over two hamlets; Nadhangōd and its branch hamlet Kapala, each with its own Great hut. The Locality Headman must reside in Nadhangōd Great hut, irrespective of which of the two hamlets he comes from. Kapala has 30 conjugal families as against 10 in Nadhangōd, and for some time past has provided the Headman. This state of affairs looks like going on indefinitely, and has occasioned some resentment by the

Nadhangōd people against "this stranger in our midst", Kapala Podheyan the Locality Headman. They say they resent Kapala men "lording it over them", and have refused to help Podheyan with his domestic tasks. As he is a widower, these include cooking, so he cooks for himself. They are also said to resent his attendance at their seances in Nadhangōd, where he acts as hamlet Headman. In Kapala the Headman-elect acts as Headman.

The Nadhangōd elders are unwilling to proceed to extremes against Podheyan and Kapala, however. Their hamlet is smaller and less wealthy than Kapala, and if they were to break the tie between them, the office of Locality Headman would probably remain with Kapala. There is no longer a local Nayar dignitary to appeal to, and even if there were, Kapala would appear to have the stronger case. Nevertheless the resentment of Nadhangōd, who have not provided a Locality Headman since about 1930, is understandable.

In every known instance the office of Locality Headman, whether in North or South Wynad, was established (according to tradition) by a local Nayar or Gaundan landlord. There is no record of a Chetty ever having done so, and in only one case is a Gaundan said to have established such an office. Establishment is usually claimed to date back to pre-British times, and in some cases this seems sufficiently probable. It is certain that no new office has been established since about 1880 or 1890. To what extent an office is exclusively a Nayar creation or merely the confirmation of a tribal office is difficult to say, but the former element seems to be more

important than the latter; certainly in those creations made in the past hundred years.

Among themselves the Locality Headman are grouped in a loosely pyramidal structure, at the apex of which is the supreme caste authority, the Headman of Appād hamlet. He is termed the Thalachil Muppan, or Headman-elder, and is one of four Headman each with the title of Thalachil. To each of the four is attached a number of Locality Headman of slightly lower status, of which there are sixteen. A list of these Headmen, followed by a sketch-map of the caste Localities, is given on the following pages.

The term Thalachil means literally Head Man, but in the sense of a political rather than a genealogical head. The term for an ordinary Locality Headman is Kunnan Kāranan or Nādan Kāranan, Kunnu or Nād meaning Ridge or Region, as we have seen; while Kāranan means an elder, a Headman by genealogical seniority. Excepting Appād, each of the four Thalachils has his own Locality, in addition to those attached to him. Appād alone has no Locality, but is very closely linked with two Localities, those of Nedienjēri and Tālata, known as the "Ten" and the "Sixteen" respectively. Appād hamlet lies on the boundary line between these two Localities. It is a hamlet of 20 huts, indistinguishable in appearance from any other Kuruma hamlet. The office of Thalachil Muppan here is said to have been established, not by the local janmi Purakādi Nambiyar (Nayar), but by the Kottayam Raja himself in the remote past.

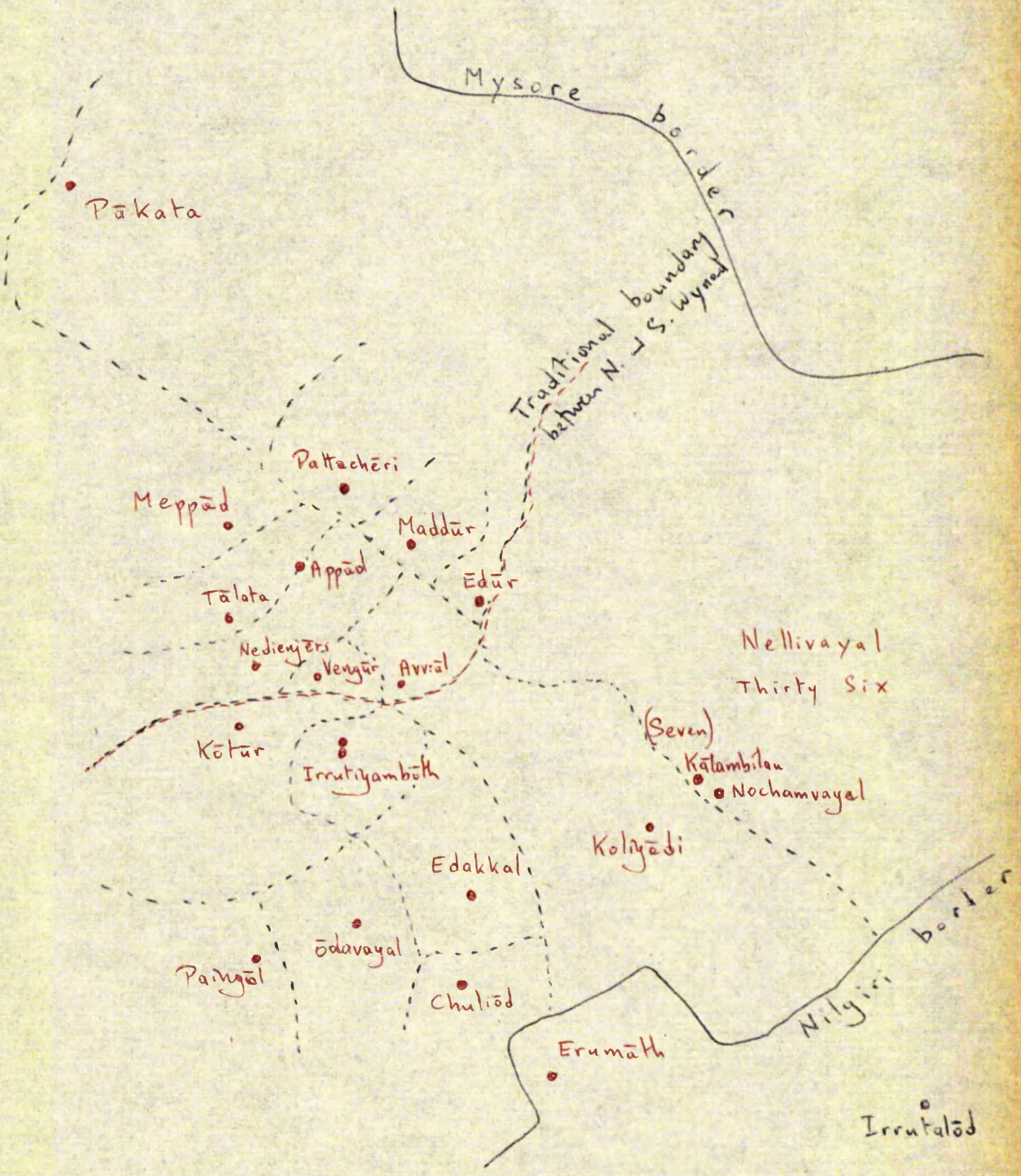
List of Kuruma Locality Headmen.

	Title	Number of affiliated hamlets
A.	North Wynad	
1.	Appād Thalachil; supreme Headman.	-
2.	Nedienjēri Muppan; "the Ten."	21
3.	Tālata " ; "the Sixteen."	21
4.	Pattachēri "	7
5.	Pākata Thalachil	17
6.	Avvāl Muppan	4
7.	Vēngūr "	5
8.	Maddūr "	6
9.	Meppād "	21
B.	South Wynad including Nilgiri Wynad.	
10.	Kōtūr Thalachil	17
11.	Edakkal Muppan	7
12.	Paingāl "	16
13.	Ōdavayal "	11
14.	Chellenjēri "	10
15.	Ūrkandi "	6
16.	Edūr Thalachil	16
17.	Chuliōd Muppan; "the Ten".	5
18.	Erumāth "	7
19.	Koliyādi "	16
20.	Nellivayal " ; "the Thirty Six."	82

Note: The total number of hamlets shown, about 300, falls short by 100 of my estimated total of Kuruma hamlets. This is because the affiliations of some are unknown, while others claim to be independent. In the list above each Thalachil is followed by those Localities whose Headmen acknowledge themselves as his clients. Localities number 6 to 9 inclusive deny that any particular Thalachil is their patron, but recognise the supremacy of Appād.

Sketch-map showing Kuruma Localities.

Scale: ¼" = 1 mile.



Sketch-map of Pudhādi and Purakādi dēsams in North Wynad showing the relation of their boundaries to those of Kuruma Localities.

Scale: 1" = 1 mile.

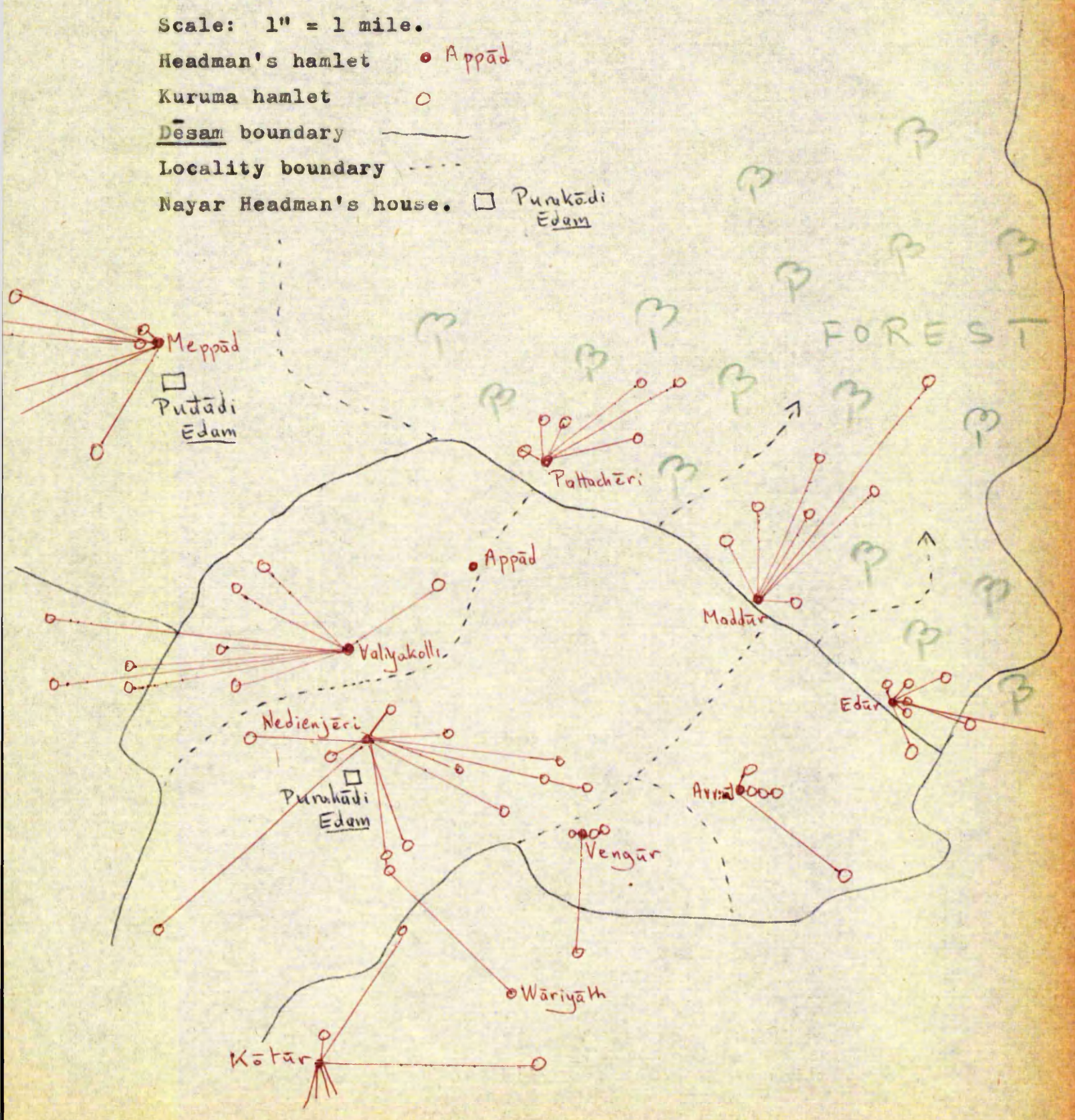
Headman's hamlet ● Appād

Kuruma hamlet ○

Dēsam boundary ——

Locality boundary - - - -

Nayar Headman's house. □ Purakādi Edam



All Kuruma Headmen, at least in theory, admit the supremacy of Appād, whether they are of North or of South Wynad. They also recognise the authority of a second office, that of the oil Nayar, who supplies the Headman of each Locality with a supply of purifying oil. He is a man of servant Nayar caste, known variously as Oil Nayar, Puliyan Nayar, or Yemman Nayar; and claims, like Appād, that his office was established in feudal times by the Kottayam Raja himself. The oil he provides is ordinary gingelly oil. It is used in purificatory ceremonies following birth and death, and its purifying properties reside rather in the source of supply than in the oil itself. Bazaar-bought gingelly oil is sometimes used by Kurumas deprived of access to the proper source and this is said to have a slight purificatory effect, but radically less than that obtained through one's own Locality Headman. Similarly oil got illicitly for a bribe from a Kuruma Headman other than one's own has some purificatory effect, but less than that obtained openly from the proper source.

The existence of these two central authorities, Appād and the oil Nayar, appears to run counter to Miller's hypothesis, since the total Kuruma caste territory is bisected by a line of major political cleavage, the boundary between the two kingdoms of North and South Wynad. However, there is evidence to suggest that in fact the unitary framework to the caste which their existence suggests is of recent date. Not every Locality Headman possesses his own oil-bottle, and others are said to have procured them in recent times, on the advice of the Nayar landlord. Of Chuliōd

Locality I was told: "They took their oil-bottle recently and reluctantly, on the advice of Chuliōd Mēnōki (the Nayar landlord.) It was given to them by the mediation of Koliyādi Poleyan's father Karuppan (i.e. about 1920). They have taken mattu recently too, after pressure from the women they have intermarried with." There is also a tradition that in the past there were two oil Nayars, though this is not correlated by informants with the existence of two separate kingdoms.

Appād is generally recognised as the supreme caste Headman, and some elders say that he alone can properly claim the title of Thalachil, the other three being really ordinary Locality Headmen (Muppans); and it is said that he can summon caste assemblies of all the Headmen to the meeting-place called Kundāni near his hamlet, at which Pākata Thalachil acts as his spokesman. But it is admitted that no such assembly has been called since 1940 (at the latest) on account of disunity among the Thalachils. Kōtūr Thalachil, who is generally recognised as ranking next to Appād, now claims that Appād is only primus inter pares among the four Thalachils, and that by his misconduct he has forfeited his office. Kōtūr and a number of his adherents have therefore declared Appād to be ostracised, for a period of 12 years, due to expire about 1962. Appād and his supporters conversely ridicule this claim.

Kōtūr lies just within the boundary of South Wynad, whereas Appād is in North Wynad. It is true that Kōtūr's claim equally with the tradition of Appād's primacy demands a unitary framework

for the caste, but his claim and the aggressive attitude behind it become more understandable if we suppose that at one time---at least until the establishment of British rule in 1805---Appād's control was limited to the Kurumas of North Wynad, Kōtūr to those of South Wynad. Kōtūr itself lies to the westward edge of the caste territory, and he is said to "control the west gate," but tradition adds that "in the past he also controlled the east gate, at Ponkuli." Edūr, the fourth Thalachil, stands to Kōtūr in the same relationship of fractional inferiority as does Pākata to Appād in North Wynad; and all the Localities adhering to them are found south of the border, as the sketch-map above indicates. The fact of division into two kingdoms however was at no time used by informants to explain the Appād-Kōtūr conflict or to justify Kōtūr's claim to equality. Rather, the unity of the entire caste was emphasised, against which this quarrel between Headmen was a mere episode. It is possible however for a Locality Headman to change his adherence from one Thalachil to another just as a Hamlet Headman can offer allegiance to different Locality Headmen; and Kōtūr's object in challenging Appād has these facts in view. To this situation we shall revert later.

At Locality level, the system of oil distribution is as follows. At every Ucchar festival the oil Nayar visits each oil-dispensing Headman in turn, and gives him a new token supply of oil in two cane bottles (ennakuti). These are kept hanging from the eaves of the Great hut, one at each end of the front verandah. That at the right end is for birth-pollution and that at the left

for death-pollution. The purifying quality of the oil lasts for one year only, from Ucchar to Ucchar, when renewal becomes essential. These bottles contain only a small quantity of oil, and require to be constantly "topped up" by the Headman with ordinary gingelly oil bought at his own expense. The purifying quality of the original oil attaches to that which is added as soon as the two are mingled in the cane bottle.

This oil is collected at need by individual Kuruma men of the Locality; by a close male agnate when required for death pollution, and by the child's father when required for birth pollution. The charge for each dispensation of oil is As 4 except for a first-born child; the charge then is As 8, and the oil must be fetched by the child's paternal grandfather. Each distribution of oil, of about two ounces, which is poured into a cane bottle brought by the man requiring it, is made on the understanding that it will be used only for a single pollution ceremony. To use it for two, or to attempt to redispose of it secretly, would destroy its purifying properties.

This system of distribution by the Locality Headman confers on him both profit and social control. A record is kept of every dispensation during the year, and when cash payment is not made on the spot it must be made at the next Ucchar Locality assembly, when the Headman goes through his accounts. The occasion of fetching the oil, and also of payment, gives the Headman an opportunity to enquire about conditions in the most distant hamlets of his Locality, and to withhold or threaten to withhold oil from those who have

misconducted themselves. The oil Nayar, for his services, is paid a lump sum at every Ucchar, corresponding with the number of hamlets served. The amounts paid vary from Rs 12 from the very large Thirty Six Locality down to Re 1. The oil supplied is not cheap; it costs about Re 1 for ten ounces, so the direct profit of the Headman is probably small; but a much larger though surreptitious income is got from distribution in "doubtful" cases---typically for illegitimate pregnancies, when the Headman overlooks the matter in return for an ex gratia payment. In these illicit profits the oil Nayar shares provided he learns of them.

The present oil Nayar is a smallholder living near Kōtūr, just within the boundary of South Wynad. His office is supposed to descend matrilineally, but in fact the present holder succeeded his father, and declares: "I will hand it on to my son or my maternal nephew, whichever is willing to take it upon himself." He takes his duties casually where they do not coincide with personal profit; and in 1955 one Headman told me:

> "It is the Nayar's job to come here on bottle-washing day, just after Ucchar, to wash the bottles and put his new oil in them, and then offer eight annas to our Locality god; but this year the beggar didn't bring any oil with him when he washed the bottles, and so we have to provide it all."

The oil Nayar is also known as Yemman Nayar, which he claims to be his proper title, though apparently without warrant. The original family of Yemman Nayar were, under the Rajas, one of the great landholders of South Wynad who took a leading part in the Pyche rebellion. Their property was escheated, and the family appear

to have become extinct. Nevertheless the claim suggests thek connection with the Kottayam Rajas who are said to have appointed the Nayar as oil-giver; and in Kuruma legend the Puliyan Nayar, supposedly this man's ancestor, even figures in the conquest by Kottayam.

In addition to the Locality Headmen, four individual hamlets also have their own oil bottles, annually renewed by the Nayar for the fee of Re 1. They have not the right to distribute this oil to non-members of their hamlets, and apparently neither do so, nor have been asked to do so. The reason advamced by Kurumas to explain this discrepancy in the system is that these four bottles were originally bestowed by Nayar families now extinct, and that the right to an oil bottle has not been withdrawn and will not be challenged unless its use is abused. One of these hamlets, that of Kidangil, appears to have controlled a Locality now defunct and replaced by the present Thirty Six.

Different statuses are attributed to oil bottles reflecting the relative political status of their possessors. That of Kidangil for example is of the lowest status, of house or hamlet status (vīd'aiyvu) since external distribution is forbidden. The bottles of normal Locality Headmen have Locality status (kunn'ayvu), from which oil should be distributed only to members of that Locality. The highest status, that of the region (nād'aiyvu), inheres in the bottles held by the four Thalachils, who may dispense oil not only within their own Localities, but also to the members of client Localities and to individual clients. Since 1954 the incipient Locality of the Seven Houses, having no bottle, has taken oil from

Edūr to emphasise their separation from the Thirty Six Locality, and are trying to secure one of their own.

Kurumas approve the use of oil not merely because it assists in removing ritual pollution (death pollution or chatthu pola and birth pollution of petta pola), but in terms of supernatural benefit and misfortune. Supernatural benefits of undefined nature are believed to follow the proper use of oil in addition to the removal of pollution, whereas misfortune is likely to ensue if no oil is used. Substitutes, or illicitly-procured oil, may also be followed by misfortune. Atthiyūr Vullan, commenting on a man (Ucchan) who had married a girl already pregnant by her classificatory brother, and who had consequently been refused oil after the birth, said:

> "For his scorched girl (i.e. polluted girl) Ucchan can obtain oil by going privately to the Thalachil and paying him Rs 5 or Rs 10, but our Locality Headman would continue to withhold oil from him, and the satisfaction you get from illicit oil is only personal and private. The woman feels more easy in her mind, and stops bothering her husband once he brings some oil. But so far as your Locality and its Headman are concerned you are still polluted, and this may continue to worry you and your wife."

The giving or refusal of oil is a sanction upon conduct possessed by the Headman, which he may wield for his own advantage, but he has a moral duty to supply it to his followers unless a specific offence has been committed. This distinction once received practical emphasis during fieldwork, when talking to the Second Headman Ōnan. His brother Pōlan the Third Headman arrived with the news that a man of Atthikūni hamlet had just arrived for oil. Atthikūni is not only

a member of the Locality but also of the Headman's patrigroup, but for the past two years they had been on bad terms, and had not paid ceremonial visits to the Headman's hamlet as was their duty. Pōlan, wishing to refuse them oil until they mended their ways, but unwilling to take the responsibility for a refusal upon himself, sought out Ōnan to ask him: "Shall we give them oil?"

"Why then should we not give them oil?"

"Well, they are keeping aloof from us, though they belong to our lineage (vīda)."

Ōnan at once got up and went off to give them oil, while an elder who was also present rebuked Pōlan, who went grumbling away. After returning Ōnan said: "Our hamlet keeps the branding-stick (i.e. oil-bottle) for this Locality, and there are two ways of using it. One is to brand an animal as our own, and the other is to cure a disease and purify it. Pōlan is always wanting to use it in the first way, or rather he fails to distinguish between the two. Let Atthikūni separate from our patrigroup if they wish, for they remain members of the Locality, and we will give them oil like any other hamlet. It is not as though they have committed any sin, like the elders of Nyāmballi."

Ōnan then went on to discuss the case of Nyāmballi, and said in part; "Nyāmballi used to take our oil, but once at a wedding there they insulted us, the First Headman and myself. They did not offer us arrack although they themselves were drinking it inside their huts. When they were drunk and excited they came out and told us to go away, since the ceremony was over and they did not need us any more. As a result the link between us was broken, and they began to take oil from other Headmen. Now, we expect supernatural benefits (nanme = good, or ritual purity) to result from taking proper oil; but from this other oil no

benefits but only misfortunes (ketadhe = bad, or impurity) resulted. Now they want to rejoin us, and have an urgent reason too since they wish to take a bride from one of my hamlets. I told them that they must first give up this alien oil, and pay a fine for their misconduct. The First Headman (of my Locality) is too lax, and would take them back for only a couple of bottles of arrack, but I want the thing done properly. Until 1950 they took oil from Edūr and when he refused to give them any more they went to Brahmins and took holy water. This is wrong, and I shall insist on a debate in full assembly (kunnu shōgam) and a fine of Rs 30."

The origin of this dispute lay in the refusal of the Locality elders of the previous generation to give Nyambālli a particular girl as a bride. They had apparently indicated willingness to give her, but when the elders came from Nyamballi to ask formally for her hand they were refused. Nyāmballi therefore used the wedding ceremony, another girl having been provided from within the Locality, to insult the Locality elders. Among other things they refused to show them the ceremonial marriage payment (kānapanam), so that the Locality elders left without taking meals there or accepting betel. Thereafter they refused both oil and mattu to Nyāmballi, who took oil variously from Edūr and Koliyādi Localities, and holy water. Holy water was used when they could not (or did not) secure oil or mattu from irregular sources. During this period the Locality Headman's curse lay upon them, which the Nyamballi elders reacted against by ending their cult of the Locality god Kandam Puli and throwing away his cash-box. The Locality god being worshipped in the Great hut of the hamlet was thought to be the agent through which the curse would act.

In summer 1955 Nyāmballi was readmitted to Locality membership. One of the elders, the hamlet Headman Chownan, made formal apology to the Locality First Headman and agreed to pay a fine of Rs 5, to be put in the Locality cash-box. The Locality god was then reinstalled at Nyāmballi, at a seance by the Locality medium attended by the Locality elders, and his cash-box was restarted with a payment of As 8. When the offering was made and accepted, the possessed medium then pulled a handful of straw from the Great-hut roof and threw it away, indicating that the curse was at an end. The marriage, for which this rapprochement was necessary, took place a few days later in the presence of the Locality Third Headman Pōlan, who acted as Go-between or Third Man (mūnāman). The latter afterwards boasted to me of his action: "No junior was bold enough to act in this matter, so I went. Ōnan (the Second Headman) knew there was a thurn (mulle; but here meaning obstacle or difficulty) in the affair, for one of the Nyāmballi elders is still aloof from us, and said openly that if anyone dared to act as mūnāman they would surely die; and this was why Ōnan himself was reluctant to go. But no misfortune has yet beset me, since Kandam Puli (the Locality god) protects me." When I asked why Nyamballi did not join the rebel Seven hamlets, or join the Localities of Edūr or Koliyādi, Pōlan replied: "The Seven have no oil, and are so small (or weak) that they would be unable to protect Nyāmballi anyway (supernatural protection is probably meant), and as for joining other Localities, they would not dare to fetch oil from so far afield for fear of tripping over (sic) some curse (nyāyam) that our Locality had laid upon them." Asked why they had "dared" to fetch oil from "far afield" for the past decade, Pōlan

replied: "They have already been suffering from our curse, and this is why they have paid a fine and rejoined the Locality."

The reference to holy water by Ōnan as quoted above is to the punyāham prepared by Brahmins and used by them to purify places or persons that have become ritually polluted. A description of the process of preparation is given by the Abbe Dubois (1). It is ordinary water which is sanctified, and thereby identified with Ganges water. Traditionally it is used by high-caste Nayars and Ambalavāsis only (2), but for some time past it has been employed by individual Kurumas in lieu of ritual oil from a Locality Headman and also of mattu from the washerman caste. Other groups of low caste status in Wynad also employ it, and appear to have done so for at least the past fifty years. Innes writes of the Kuricchiyas:- "...their women require water sanctified by a Brahmin to purify them." And also: "There is no ceremonial mattu among the lower castes or the hill tribes, and the ingredients used in purification vary considerably; the Kuricchiyas and Malakkars who are the aristocracy of the hill tribes are said to require water drawn by a Brahmin, as are also the Wynad Chetties." (3).

There was no tradition among my informants of an earlier general use of holy water in preference to oil or mattu, but rather the belief that it was an innovation, used as a substitute for them. They describe

1) Dubois pp. 151-2. Zacharias translates punyāham as "consecrated water, purification." The word derives from the Sanskrit punyam meaning purity, virtue, or merit.

2) Rao, p. 66.

3) Innes, p. 136 and p. 168.

it as being "sold by Brahmins" at As 4 a time, the same price as that exacted by Locality Headmen for oil and by washermen for mattu. Those who use it do so as a temporary expedient, and not with any idea of raising their status as part of a process of Sanskritisation. Kurumas are familiar with its use since the village temples are themselves purified with it before any ceremony conducted by a Brahmin. The Brahmin priest himself manufactures the holy water, then sprinkles it with a mango-leaf cup both on the temple building and on any other persons who may be assisting in the ceremony. It was said that some Kurumas forced to obtain oil or mattu from an illicit or suspect source also use punyāham as a reinsurance. Like oil and mattu, the substance is always obtained by men, but it appears that they do so at the behest of their women rather than of their own accord.

Oil is used by both sexes to remove the pollution of death. Women use a second substance in addition to oil, to remove the pollution of childbirth and of first menstruation. This substance is mattu, which exists in a variety of forms, and can be provided only by the village washerman. The term mattu means literally "change", a change of clothing; and for Nayars and most Chetties mattu consists of a ritually pure white cotton cloth, prepared and delivered by a married woman of the village washerman's family. Castes below Chetties use a liquid form of mattu, and that used by Kurumas is a solution of soda in water. Originally this liquid was prepared from the ash of burned leaves of the coconut-palm, but the present practice is for the washerman to use commercial washing soda dissolved in water. A small

bamboo bottle is prepared as a receptacle by the Kuruma man fetching the mattu, normally the husband or father of the woman for whom the mattu is needed. This man personally collects the mattu from the village washerman's house, where he pays the stipulated sum of As 4; or As 8 for a firstborn child. Birth-oil and mattu are fetched on the third day after the birth; the oil bottle being carried in the right hand, from which it is suspended by a loop, and the mattu bottle in the left hand, suspended from the end of a stick at least two feet long. It must be held well clear of the body or it may become polluted. Castes ranking below the Kurumas, including Urālis, Naikas and Paniyas, do not use any kind of mattu.

The distribution of mattu links the Kurumas to the local caste system more closely than does that of oil. Distribution is made at intercaste village level by an official washerman (Vannān) appointed by the traditional village Headman, normally a Nayar. Thus at Nellivayal, which lies partly in Nenmēni and partly in Nulpura village, a single washerman acts for both. He is appointed by the absentee Nayar landlord of Nellivayal, whose family once provided the Headmen of Nulpura village, and which still controls the village temple, to which the washerman is attached. Neither the Chetty Headman (Adhigāri) of Nenmēni nor the Tōṭṭiyar Headman of Nulpura have any direct control over the washerman.

All the Hindu mattu-users of Nulpura, who in the past would all have owed allegiance to the Nellivayal Nayar, must use mattu from this source and no other. The Nayar, and also the caste-Headman of each caste, possess the right to cause the washerman to refuse

his services to any individual or group within the village that has been publicly ostracised. In the past this power rested with the landlord alone, acting on the advice of these caste Headmen. Today, with the Nayar family an absentee group, caste Headmen exercise this authority themselves, nominally with the permission of the Nayar. The Nayar alone still retains the right to dismiss or appoint a new washerman at will.

The village washerman (dēsa-Vannān) is himself a member of a caste organisation, and owes allegiance not only to his Nayar patron but also to the head washerman of the Chiefdom (nādu), the nādu-Vannān. This dignitary is himself a village washerman, but with authority over all washermen in the Chiefdom in intra-caste affairs. The existence of this organisation helps, or must have helped in the past, to prevent the establishment of unauthorised washermen plying an illicit trade, or a villager who had been refused mattu obtaining it from another village.

The income of the village washermen derives partly from the contingent payments in cash when mattu is taken, and partly from an annual service payment in kind. The latter payment is proportional to the caste status and to the size of the group served. Among the Kurumas the group making a service payment is still the hamlet; for some other castes it is now the elementary family. At or about Ucchar the washerman goes the round of every hamlet in his village and collects these payments from the hamlet Headman or Manager. Each Kuruma elementary family contributes 1 seer of paddy to the hamlet total. The washerman himself must pay the Nayar landlord a renewal

fee in kind in respect of his office at each Ucchar. An initial appointment is made on payment of a larger quantity of paddy or of cash, the amount depending on the economic value of the post and on whether a hut and land go with it. At Nellivayal the washerman occupies a hut and a small area of dry land belonging to the Nayar landlord, but has no wet land. He also has duties connected with the village temple and with a subordinate temple some distance away. There he must be prepared to act as medium for the god Vetta Karuman, said to be a form of Shiva; and to provide a ritually pure cloth (kūra) which must be hoisted aloft on a tall bamboo pole to mark the opening of certain temple festivals.

Immigration into Wynad has brought many members of the washerman castes there, and though they lack official posts they are prepared to sell their ritual services to those Hindus ready to take advantage of them. The official washermen for their part often neglect their duties; and the Nellivayal washerman Rāghavan for example is employed full-time by the P. W. D. as a road foreman or inspector at Rs 64 a month. He is content to hold the office, but leaves the running of it entirely to his widowed mother, her daughters, and his wife. These supplement the family income further by taking in washing in the normal English sense of the term for both Muslim and Christian customers. Of the immigrant washermen most are smallholders but some practice indigenous medecine, while others are tailors (1).

1) Vannāns or Peruvannāns make up well under 1% of the population of Malabar, and it is my impression that they are relatively fewer in Wynad than in the coastal region. Since 1945 a Kerala-wide caste organisation, the Peruvannan Sangh, has been in existence.

The partial breakdown of the traditional intercaste village organisation has given the Kuruma Locality Headman a greater degree of control over the provision of mattu by the village washerman, and even over that office itself. In 1954/5 the Thirty Six Headman at Nellivayal was able to secure the removal of the Nellivayal washerman on the proved evidence of his misconduct with a Kuruma girl: a thing which, I was assured, would certainly not have occurred in the past, before the landlord's power had declined.

In some villages, which lack an official washerman, the Kuruma Locality Headman and his wife have themselves taken over the dispensation of mattu. This is the case today at Pākam, a Locality of North Wynad too remote from the official washerman at Nellarōth for convenient access; so the Kuruma Headman himself dispenses mattu from a source which the official washerman periodically renews. At Nellivayal also, during the hiatus between the washerman's offence and his replacement by the landlord, the Locality Headman himself likewise dispensed mattu to his followers (1).

On the other hand, if the landlord's power over the village washerman has passed in part to the Locality Headman, the power of the latter over his followers has not increased proportionately. Some of the immigrants are washermen, who practise an unauthorised trade in mattu as a sideline. Immigrant Hindus requiring mattu tend to turn to the nearest washerman rather than seek the official one; and may even prefer the services of a fellow immigrant to those of an indigenous washerman. Kurumas refused mattu by their Headman's order generally turn to such irregular sources.

1) But only when so authorised by the Nayar landlord.

Control over the distribution of oil and of mattu are both important elements buttressing the Locality Headman's authority over his followers; but it must be emphasised that the control is not exclusive or arbitrary. As we have seen moral considerations are involved in the distribution of oil. It should not be withheld unless a specific offence has been committed. The Headman is not the source but the distributor of oil within the caste, which allows intervention by both the Nayar landlord as giver of the right of distribution, and by the oil Nayar who annually renews the supply. Partition and expropriation have impoverished all the traditional landlords and some have emigrated to their coastal estates; this and other factors have made their intervention in matters concerning oil distribution less frequent, and less effective when made than in the past. On the other hand intervention by the oil Nayar appears to have become more frequent, and at Locality level he attends, often uninvited, some of the formal discussions of each major dispute involving oil. Of Kuruma girls who become pregnant before marriage it is said: "The first to know of it is the girl's mother, and next the oil Nayar." He is present at such discussions as an observer rather than an adjudicator, concerned to extract from the elders his customary share of any fine that may be imposed rather than to secure a particular decision.

Oil Nayar and landlord apart, the distribution of oil is an intra-caste matter. Mattu is in different case, since the

village washerman is not only appointed by the landlord but also serves other castes in the village. All these castes therefore have a direct concern with the washerman, and any dispute concerning his status is a village matter. Disputes over oil-bottles do not involve the village.

Every Locality Headman covets the control of oil distribution within his Locality, but it appears that at any one point in time the distribution of oil-bottles is never completely congruent with that of Locality Headmen, or of those who lay claim to such a position. It is not possible to assert that this incongruence existed further back than the latter half of the last century---indeed it is possible that the institution of the Headman's oil-bottle is no more than a century old---but it can certainly be traced back for fifty years and more. New Localities may be formed by fisson within the existing Localities, and the Headman of the former endeavour to secure their position by obtaining oil-bottles. Only the traditional landlord has power to bestow a bottle, and this he may refuse to do lest he antagonise the existing Headmen. This is now the position at Nellivayal, where a dissident group known as the Seven Houses have split away from the Thirty Six Locality but have still been unable to secure their own oil. It is said that some years ago the leaders of the Seven, ignoring the landlord and caste tradition made their own oil-bottles of gold and silver, and from these dispensed oil among their followers, but that supernatural ill-effects were suffered by those who used it. The bottles were

then broken up (tradition says that they were buried somewhere), and the bid for independence had failed. Since then the Seven have continued to use the oil supply of the Thirty Six until the occasion of the washerman's dismissal in 1955. When the fact of the washerman's misconduct first became known, the Nayar agent and the the landlord himself were anxious to overlook it as a minor fault that a fine could atone for; but the Thirty Six Headman and his followers insisted on action against him being taken. Baradhan, the leader of the Seven, tried to use this situation to ingratiate himself with the landlord by accepting his attitude, and continuing to use the washerman's services. The Thirty Six then put pressure on him by refusing him oil; and eventually were able to induce the landlord to replace the washerman.

The Seven thus suffered a rebuff; but were able to maintain their position, and even improve it, by turning to the wider caste organisation. Baradhan had already been cultivating a client relationship with the Thalachils of Edūr and Kōtūr. The present Edūr Thalachil is in fact the matrigroup head of Baradhan's son, so that the clientship was in part established through this kinship connection. Refused oil by the Thirty Six, the Seven have become a client group of Edūr, from where they now draw oil. They may be said, then actually to have improved their position by demonstrating their independance of the Thirty Six, though they have not succeeded in obtaining an independent oil supply.

V ii: Disputes within and between Localities.

The previous section has provided a general account of the Kuruma Locality and the role of its Headman as the dispenser of oil and the controller of mattu, both substances essential for the proper performance of major Kuruma rites de passage. In this section the internal organisation of a Locality is discussed, with special reference to the ties of kinship and affinity linking together the component hamlets of a Locality, the type of dispute that arises within it, and the role of the Headman in settling these disputes.

A Locality Headman is automatically also the Headman of his hamlet; but the process of succession is more complicated than that in a hamlet to simple hamlet Headmanship. The office is Nayar-established, and each process of succession needs to be confirmed by the appropriate Nayar dignitary. Succession to the office tends to fall within a single hamlet, but where branch hamlets have been established, there may be a disputed succession. We noticed in the previous section the case of Erumāth Locality, where the branch hamlet of Kapala holds the office instead of the parent hamlet of Nadhangōd. Here the office is mobile within the total patrigroup in both its branches. At Nellivayal, where two offices are held, they seem to have been static for a long time past in the hamlets of upper and lower Nochamvayal respectively. That in the lower hamlet remains static, but owing to disturbances in the upper hamlet, that particular office appears to have regained mobility within the wider patrigroup and to have passed to the

hamlet of Kālambilau. Upper Nochamvayal is contesting this, but the traditional practise of referring the dispute to the Nayar landlord is rendered more difficult by his absence from the area and by his loss of economic power there.

As in succession to Headmanship of a hamlet, the gods are consulted, but the House-gods of a hamlet cannot decide a matter disputed between two hamlets; they can only confirm the eligibility of a particular candidate. Confirmation comes from the gods of the village temple, controlled by the Nayar landlord (1). In the absence of the landlord the pronouncements of these gods are less valued by the villagers. While the cults of some of them fall into desuetude, those of others, whose mouthpiece may be a Kuruma medium, are opened to factional pressures. When Tōtapora Kēlan was medium at Nellivayal temple, his pronouncements tended to favour Kālambilau's pretensions. When he was succeeded by Murugan, the god appeared to favour upper Nochamvayal. Their preferences were not blatant, but in a factional contest even impartiality becomes suspect and the authenticity of the medium's possession may be questioned.

With the decline in power of the Nayar landlord, his interest in the succession to caste offices has also declined. In the past h had a direct political and economic interest in controlling them. This is no longer so today; and it has led to an increase in factionalism within the Locality, particularly where the Headmanship

1) As we have explained in Chapter III, the owner is the village temple (the <u>janmi</u>) is usually but not always also village Headma

is vested in a patrigroup dispersed over several hamlets. When rival claimants from different hamlets contest the office, each lokks outwards for support to the other hamlets of the Locality, and especially to those with which it has intermarried. There may be attempts to influence the behaviour of mediums, particularly at the Ucchar festival, when every hamlet is expected to send gifts and representatives to the Locality Headman's hamlet. A text taken from Nedienjēri Locality in North Wynad illustrates this:-

"Here the hamlets of Nedienjēri and Chūndakāth are Platform (thara, or parent hamlet) and Branch (kūr, or branch hamlet). The Locality Headman's office was vested in Nedienjēri until lately, when Chūndakāth Punjulan seized it by a ruse. He is Headman of his hamlet, and very able, whereas the Headman of Nedienjēri hamlet, one Vēthi, is a little dwarf of a fellow, and incompetent..... He is senior to Punjulan in terms of generation, but his junior in age, and he was not born in the hamlet but brought in by his mother as a porāthemagan (or outside son).

Punjulan seized the office by this trick: he concerted with the medium Apiyan that the latter should hide in a hut at the Ucchar festival and then suddenly emerge in a state of possession, beating a drum as if for the Ucchar drum-dance. This he did, coming out of the hut as the god Pākā dēvam, picking up the drum, and running off with it to Chūndakāth nearby, as though the dance and ceremony ought to be held there. This began the dispute, for Punjulan claimed this action showed the god favoured his claim. The Ancestor spirits were consulted to settle the matter, but the

ghost of Punjulan's father possessed one medium, and a Nedienjēri ghost another, and these two fought and could not agree. Today each man claims to be the true Locality Headman; and the drum-dance is done in Chūndakāth, but the Urālis dance in Vēthi's hamlet as before."

So at present the matter rests, some hamlets of the Locality supporting Vēthi and other Punjulan, their support being determined principally by the nature of their genealogical or affinal connections with Chūndakāth or with Nedienjēri. Neither the local janmi, Purakādi Nayar, nor the local Thalachil, Appād, have been able to acheive a settlement, and both claimants attend his councils. Vēthi retains the Locality oil-bottle, but Punjulan and his followers are able to take oil direct from Appād. A stronger personality than Vēthi might have put pressure on Appād to refuse this service, but this he has not succeeded in doing. Appād for his part is unwilling to break with either man lest he turn to his rival, the Kōtūr Thalachil. (1).

Disputes of this kind seem to be inherent in the Kuruma system of succession, in which seniority by age may conflict with seniority by generation (though the latter is customarily decisive), and

1) Similar disputes can in theory involve Appād itself, but there the succession is protected by a number of special regulations. These were reported to me as follows: "At Appād we favour the children of the Great Door (i.e. sons) as against those of the Small Door (i.e. sisters and their sons) more than in any other hamlet. Under no circumstances may our sisters and their sons live in the hamlet for more than a few days, nor the sons be married from our Great hut. When an Appād man dies, his widow may be taken away, but her sons must remain with us; or if the wife die first, her brothers may not take her sons away."
The implications for succession are plain, though I have been unable fully to check them. Appad has not branched out

into subsidiary hamlets, which might cause a disputed succession to the Caste Headmanship, but this is largely prevented by the fact that Appād has no Locality. Though a branch might be established nearby in Purakādi dēsam, it would then be subordinate either to Nedienjēri or to Chūndakāth. This does not entirely obviate the possibility of a disputed succession, but in fact no branching has yet occurred, even though the special customs regarding residence and succession would seem to make for a more rapid growth of this hamlet than others.

especially where the rival candidates are from different hamlets inhabited by different branches, or segments, of the same patrigroup. Also within a hamlet dispute may arise over status, a "born son" (petta magan) being preferred to an affiliated one (porāthe magan), and either of them to an exterior member. The latter is theoretically excluded from the succession anyway, but as we have said, the son or son's son of an exterior member may be accepted into full membership.

A number of devices limit the likelihood of such dispute. One is the customary restriction of succession to a single hamlet, usually the seniormost hamlet of two or more in terms of the date at which it was established. Another is the custom of delegating authority within than hamlet to the immediate successors of the Locality Headman. This is something that hamlet Headmen do not do; but in a Locality, and especially a large one, there are often so many calls on a Headman's time that he must delegate his role to his younger brothers, who are known as the Second, Third, and Fourth Headman respectively. This institutionalised delegation makes succession less likely to be contested from another hamlet.

Supposing a dispute does arise within the Locality Headman's hamlet or patrigroup, it is possible to secure a settlement in many cases by reference of the dispute to an exterior authority; either to the Nayar landlord, or to inangu patrigroup within the same Locality from which the Headman's adviser and Locality medium are commonly drawn. Something has been said about relations with the Nayar. We shall now turn to relations with the inangu hamlet.

Localities vary considerably in size, both in terms of territorial extent and of the number of hamlets they include. The largest Locality is the Nellivayal Thirty Six, which includes about 80 Kuruma hamlets spread over many square miles of ridge, paddyfield, and jungle. The smallest, those of Avvāl and Vengūr, are only about one square mile in area, and number only some five or six hamlets each. The model Locality consists essentially of two groups, each of several hamlets connected patrilaterally; one providing the Headman, and the other, a group inangu to the former, providing the Locality adviser and medium. But significant variations from this model occur, and these variations seem to bear a relation to the size of the Locality---primarily in terms of the number of hamlets it contains.

The affinal tie is, as we have seen, an assymetric one. A hamlet or patrigroup giving brides to another cannot take them in return: or if one branch of a patrigroup were to do so, thus breaking the assymetric link, then fission of that patrigroup normally follows. Giving and taking, moreover, are connected with territorial distance. There is a preference for giving brides to nearby hamlets, but for taking them (which implies dependence) from more distant hamlets. In the model Locality we are adumbrating, the Headman's patrigroup will give brides to the inangu group from which the adviser is drawn but will take them from out-side the Locality limits altogether. They do not however intermarry with the hamlets of other Locality Headman as a matter of policy, and their members certainly cannot be said to form an aristocracy within the caste.

By giving daughters as brides within the Locality, the Headman's patrigroup and hamlet binds to itself the other hamlets of the Locality by an affinal tie, later to become a kinship tie, which reinforces that of simple allegiance. By taking brides from outside his Locality from many different hamlets, external ties are kept as weak and tenuous as possible. But in a very large and numerous Locality there will not be enough brides to give to bind all the component hamlets to that of the Headman, while in a very small one the system may break down because of the ambiguities inherent in the descent system within each group of hamlets.

There is no regular term to describe or address a cross-cousin. In practise a cross-cousin is thought of as a brother or sister (ãngala or pengala), and may be addressed by the appropriate term. In no case can a cross-cousin be married. This may or may not extend to the other members of the hamlets on each side, the classificatory cross-cousins. They too may be regarded as "brothers" and "sisters", or they may be addressed as affines (aliyanmar), even though no intermarriage has taken place as yet in that generation. But a fresh bride can be taken from the hamlet that gave one in the preceding generation, provided she is not a direct cross-cousin, but a member of a different segment of the same patrigroup.

What determines whether this is to happen or not? Whether a new bride is to be given and the affinal terminology employed, or whether no bride is given and the sibling terminology used? Territorial proximity is certain crucial here. Really distant

hamlets that have intermarried always use the affinal terminology towards each other, implying the possibility of renewed intermarriage. But the distance between them means that social relations between them are not continuous save in a limited sense. They have been defined in terms of a particular intermarriage. Between neighbouring hamlets that have intermarried, relations are continuous and often tense. Their scope is wider than that of relations between distant hamlets which have intermarried, and involve continuous economic, political and ritual relations. Moreover all members of both hamlets are involved in these relations, whereas where the hamlets are distant their connection deeply involves only the two families directly party to the marriage. It may be that the adjacent hamlets quarrel, that one is willing to take another bride but the other has none to give, or that her father thinks he can get a higher brideprice elsewhere. For such reasons as these the marriage connection may not be renewed in subsequent generations, and the matrilateral link established by the original marriage may cease to be recognised as such, or assimilated to a patrilateral one, as has apparently happened between Nochamvayal and Thoduti, and may yet happen between Totapora and Kalambilau.

This ambiguity may be made use of by Locality Headmen and elders for their own ends. I shall now give an example from Pattacheri in North Wynad, a small Locality of seven closely-grouped hamlets. Each hamlet has its own Great hut and Headman. Three of them, including Pelapetta and Pattacheri hamlets, are branches of the same patrigroup, which supplies the Locality Headman. The other four

hamlets, including that of Pāplashēri, are said to have intermarried in the past with Pelapetta and Pattachēri (presumably taking brides from them, though this is not certain); but today all seven hamlets are regarded as forming an exogamous unit, marriage within which would be incestuous.

About 1946 Pelapetta Pūdhan eloped with a woman living in the area, one Basavi. Her mother had married a Pāplashēri man, but had left him to become the concubine of another man in Edūr Locality. To this union a daughter was born, Basavi. Her mother then returned to Pāplashēri and was accepted by her husband. The daughter became Physically mature in Pāplashēri, and both her maturity ceremony and her subsequent marriage to a man of the Thirty Six were held in that hamlet. Eventually Basavi left him to live with Pelapetta Pūdhan as his concubine. But others hold this union to be incestuous.

Pūdhan asserts that his concubinage with Basavi is legitimate, and can be converted into marriage by making the appropriate payments. He states that he intends to do so "as soon as my House-people will agree to it." He denies the incest on the grounds that Basavi was born at Edūr, not Pāplashēri, and hence the union is legitimate; but he also claims that "Pelapetta and Pāplashēri have intermarried in the past, and therefore may do so again now!" It is not certain how long ago this was, but the direction of bride-giving was presumably from Pelapetta to Pāplashēri. Pūdhan is therefore reversing the direction of marriage. This is legitimate only when three generations have passed, and the original union is "forgotten."

The Kurumas of the Locality however have excluded both Pūdhan and Basavi from their hamlets, and hold no intercourse with them. They inhabit a storehut outside Pelapetta on land privately held by Pūdhan. Since 1946 Pūdhan has succeeded to the office of both hamlet and Locality Headman, but his alleged incest has been used by his immediate juniors to exclude him from succession. They, led by Pattachēri Shangu, who is Pudhan's immediate junior in the patrigroup, submitted their case to the local Nayar, Pudhādi Nambiyar, and he upheld it. Shangu has therefore been inducted to the Locality Headmanship at the village temple. He is supported by the vast majority of the members of the Locality, including the men of Pelapetta hamlet, even though this involves the office passing from their hamlet to Pattachēri. In acheiving this unanimity an important factor was the position of the Nambiyar.

His family is one of the most ancient in Wynad; and until it partitioned in 1940, it owned virtually the entire village (dēsam) of some 24 square miles. Most of the coparceners have disposed of their shares and now live in coastal Malabar, but the Nambiyar concerned has retained and augmented his own share, and enjoys considerable local influence. He is Headman of the village (Adighāri), and owns the village temple. He can also claim a family connection with the Rajas of Kottayam, a lady of whose house visits the temple annually.

As with all disputes of moment, discussion of this case extended throughout the entire Kuruma community, and many of the

details were gathered in the Nellivayal area, a dozen miles away, where Pudhan has kin whom he continues to visit. It is the opinion of all Nellivayal elders that Pūdhan is in the wrong, and only his kin defend him. His elopmmant with Basavi is, in itself, a matter for jesting. His real offence is that his proposed spouse (and present concubine) is a "sister"; a Locality sister, or kunnu-pengala, whom he addressed as "sister" when she was a girl in Pāplashēri. Totapora Murugan commented: "Once my hamlet took a bride from Nochamvayal: hence I address Nochamvayal Chickanan (the Headman) as Younger Father (yēpan), as Pūdhan did Basavi's father. Now he has stolen this girl! I am now looking for a wife, and Chickanan's daughter is looking for a husband: but how could I marry her? She is my sister!"

But an even more important consideration seems to be, that Pudhan is reversing the direction of marriage before the link has been forgotten: indeed with the hamlets in such close proximity it is unlikely to be forgotten. Between distant hamlets a fine might compound for the offence, but here, questions of status are involved. The bride-giving hamlet regards itself as in some way superior to that it gives to: it is a "cheriya bandham" or lesser link. To reverse the direction of marriage is (in this instance) to make the Headman's patrigroup of Pattachēri-Pelapetta the "lesser link". And if the son of such a union should one day become Headman, he might find himself under the control of maternal uncles in the bride-giving hamlet of Pāplashēri. Political rivalries (since Pudhan was about to succeed to the Headmanship) also helped to ensure action was taken against him.

According to Shangu and other elders, Pudhan's ostracism is not permanent: the incest is not as grave as clan-incest. Providing he ceases to cohabit with Basavi, he can be readmitted to his hamlet and

Locality, and in theory to his lost offices. But the existing office-holders, even while they regard themselves as, in a sense, only acting temporarily, will hardly surrender their offices now. Any guilt they may feel at having usurped these offices is removed by having referred the case to Pudhādi Nambiyar, by their declaration that they are willing for Pūdhan to return if he will send Basavi away, and by their declaration that they are acting in a temporary capacity. In ceremonial contexts the latter declaration is given validity by their keeping separate the periodic cash offerings paid to the gods by their congregations. These will only be added to the sacred cash box when Pūdhan (now sixty) is dead.

A novel development occurred in June 1955 in this case. Pūdhan was brought to Pelapetta and installed, with his concubine and chattels, in the hamlet Great hut. Those who brought him there were members of a caste reform association led by Chōmādi Velukan, the Kuruma member of the Madras Legislative Assembly. At the time selected, the Great hut was unoccupied, so that no violence was involved. Since then, Pūdhan has lived in the Great hut unmolested but ignored. The Pelapetta juniors now conduct their ceremonies in Pattachēri hamlet; while Pudhan himself cannot conduct any ceremonies since he has no congregation. His death may well terminate the dispute, since he has no children living.

The intervention on his behalf was made by Kurumas from a distance, none being from this Locality, and none with any direct concern in the dispute. The motive behind their action is apparently a desire by the M.L.A. and his followers to show that they can intervene effectively against traditional authority represented by the Locality

Headman Shangu and his Nayar patron. It is uncertain whether Pūdhan himself requested this intervention, but he may well have done so. At Nellivayal, when I first heard of this development, the interventionists were described as "Communists". The M.L.A. is in fact a Praja Socialist, but the label "Communist" tends to be applied to anyone whose actions flout tradition and are primarily political.

This case raises a number of points. It is certain that the Locality, two generation ago or less, conformed with our model of two or more patrigroups, one supplying the Headman and the other, intermarrying with it, providing auxiliary services. Chorlamboth and Pāplashēri hamlets provide the Locality medium and adviser, while Pelapetta and Pattachēri provide the Headman. But though these offices remain stable in the two patrigroups, intermarriage between them does not necessarily continue. It may do, or it may not. Just as the hamlet is an exogamous unit, so a group of adjacent hamlets may come to observe exogamy, at least for a time. What makes the hamlet an exogamous unit is the fact of its members being co-residential, and regarding each other as patrikinsmen---fathers, brothers and sons. This kinship may be real or fictional; but it is made effective by common allegiance to the Great hut, its priest and its emblems, and a common cult of the House gods and Ancestors. The unifying element in this kinship is common membership of a generation of "brothers." A first marriage between two hamlets links their members in an affinal relationship; but in the subsequent generation when affinity becomes kinship, both hamlets enter a common generation system. The sister's sons remain excluded from the bride-giving

hamlet as possible heirs or successors, but are nevertheless the "brothers" of their male cross-cousins. A renewal of the marriage alliance may very well follow, but it demands (like every marriage) the approval of the gods, and hence of the congregation.

Pūdhan's mistake was in entering into concubinage with a woman who could be represented as a "sister", a Locality sister, or kunnu pengala. Such a union is entered into without prior arrangement or appeal to the gods. It therefore placed Pūdhan in a position where he was at the mercy of a rival, his successor to the Headmanship, Shangu. The crucial point then becomes the attitude of the woman's "brothers", the Pāplashēri elders. None of them are her uterine brothers, and all of them supported Shangu's attitude.

The case has wider implications, since it may make further intermarriage within the Locality more difficult. (1). Pattachēri seems, in fact, to be moving towards the type of organisation represented by Avvāl Locality. This is a very small Locality of five adjacent hamlets, all said to be branches of the same patrigroup with a single generation system running through them. The Locality is exogamous, and Headmanship moves freely between all five hamlets according to which hamlet Headman is genealogically most senior. The auxiliary offices of medium, adviser, and Third man are provided within the Locality from any hamlet other than that providing the Headman. Possibly the Kuruma statement that all five hamlets were created by the branching of one patrigroup is correct, but there is

1) There is also the fact that recognition of Pūdhan's union with Basavi would have reversed the traditional direction of bride-giving between the hamlets.

also the possibility that matrilaterally linked hamlets have merged. There is some evidence for this in the fact that, of the five hamlets, one has no clan taboos, three taboo Kādiva, and one taboos marriage with Vilipa clanspeople.

Localities of this type, small in area and numbers, must draw all or most of their brides from outside the Locality. Genealogies show that they intermarry with hamlets distributed widely over the caste area, in many different Localities. Nevertheless, this position of having to intermarry outside the Locality is probably correlated with a higher degree of dependence on the local Thalachil than is exhibited by the larger Localities. The Thirty Six Headman, as we have seen, is traditionally tied to Edūr, but verbally emphasises his independence of and equality with the Edūr Thalachil. About fifty per cent. of all marriages entered into by members of the Thirty Six are within the Locality, whereas all those of Avvāl are across Locality boundaries.

In this dispute a high degree of agreement was reached on the gravity of the offence and the measures to be taken against the offenders. This is not always so; and even where the offence is serious and well proven, it is not always easy to take action against the guilty person or group. This was the case when, in 1952, the Kotur Thalachil ostracised Wāriyāth hamlet. The extra-Locality kinship ties of his followers, and the political implications of his decision to ostracise the hamlet, reduced the extent of public agreement and the effectiveness of the sanctions, in contrast with the case of Pelapetta Pūdhan.

At the assembly summoned by Kōtūr to announce his decision against Wāriyāth the Headmen of three other Localities were present, and a total of about 100 hamlets were represented, directly or indirectly (at least 15 hamlets were directly represented). Part of the council discussion ran as follows:

Thalachil: "Everybody here knows the details of this ritual pollution in Wāriyāth. What are we to decide about it? Since all the elders are assembled here we must agree on a course of action and carry it through. If juniors fail to obey their elders, what is the use of Headmen (kāranans)? If a boy disobeys his father, what must be done? I have asked you all to come and settle this matter publicly, so none could say I acted improperly in it."

First elder: "Something must certainly be done to uphold our caste customs (aiyvu), or the whole community will be ruined!"

Second elder: "But since we have married among so many families this ritual pollution may affect all of us; how can we prevent that?"

Thalachil: "Hamlets and individuals connected with this polluted hamlet must have no further intercourse with it. Wāriyāth has recently given a girl in marriage to Iliyamboth (hamlet); she must be divorced or sent home, or if this cannot be done, she must not be allowed to visit Wāriyāth. This council must swear not to receive ostracised persons or their relatives inside their huts, but give them food and water outside." (1).

Second elder: "Marriages have been contracted before this pollution was incurred, and my own juniors are affected. Can you ask our people to feed their daughters on the verandah though they have committed no offence?"

1) Non-Kurumas may enter a hamlet compound, but not enter the huts, especially the Great hut. Non-Kurumas of higher caste status may be fed and entertained on the front verandah, employees and non-Kurumas of lower caste status may be fed on the back verandah.

Thalachil: "Then prohibit visiting between the people concerned; ask them to stay away until we reach a final decision on the matter."

Third elder: "It is rumoured that this boy of Wāriyāth (who has committed the offence) is now looking for a wife. Can any hamlet give him a girl if Kōtūr permits it?"

Thalachil: "Well, the rainy season is almost upon us. For the time being let all be in abeyance, and when the dry weather comes we will try to contact those who were not here today, and reach a common decision with them. After three months the bad water can be released from the paddyfield and new water led in; but during this period let no-one admit the people of Wāriyāth to their huts!"

There is agreement here on general principles; on the need for unanimity and the need to recognise and counteract pollution, but obstacles posed by the existence of particular kinship connections. The Thalachil therefore presents his decision to ostracise Wāriyāth as an interim decision, hoping that it will be generally accepted but able to retreat from his position if it is not. His paddyfield metaphor hints that the ostracism and its concommitant difficulties is only temporary; and derives from the belief that time is a major element in diminishing ritual pollution, though the leading in of new water is necessary to terminate it altogether.

This dispute leads us on to a new element in Locality and inter-Locality disputes, that of territorial rights. The dispute was overtly concerned with the status of a Kuruma youth of Wāriyāth hamlet who had contracted ritual pollution. He was found to be having sexual relations with a Naika girl, and indeed had made her pregnant.

The hamlet elders had not disavowed his conduct or submitted to the Thalachil's intervention, therefore the entire hamlet must suffer ostracism. In fact the basis of the dispute lay deeper than this, and concerned a conflict over territorial and political rights between the Headmen of Kōtūr and Nedienjēri Localities.

In theory territorial and political rights coincide, but in practice they often do not, particularly since the breakdown of the feudal village organisation. A Kuruma Locality Headman possesses two major series of rights; firstly his rights over the soil or Earth of his Locality (mann-avakāsam), and secondly his rights over the men owing him allegiance (āl-avakāsam). All Kurumas living on his Earth (manne) should owe him allegiance, and conversely all Kurumas owing him allegiance may be said to live on his territory. Migration and change of allegiance continually distort this ideal, and Wāriyāth provides an example of this.

It is a small and recently established settlement just within the limits of Kōtūr Locality. The settlers migrated from a nearby hamlet, that of Mandokkara in the Nedienjēri Locality, and have retained close ties with this hamlet besides continuing to owe allegiance to the Nedienjēri Headman. Kōtūr Thalachil, aware of the existing rivalry for the Headmanship of the Locality, put pressure on Wāriyāth to transfer their allegiance to him and his gods since they were now living on his territory. This pressure reached a crisis when news of the Wāriyāth youth's misdemeanour was known. By Kuruma standards the youth's offence was a minor one, but it gave Kōtūr a suitable opportunity to assert publicly his control over the hamlet.

However Nedienjēri Headman---in this case the Chūndakāth Punjulan mentioned earlier---took the part of Wāriyāth. He denied the right of Kōtūr to intervene and said that the accusation of misconduct and pollution was a matter that he would settle himself.

In feudal times such a dispute would probably not have arisen, or had it done so it would speedily have been settled by intervention of the local Nayar landlords. Since Wāriyāth lay in a different village (dēsam) from that of its parent hamlet and Locality judgment would presumably have gone in favour of Kōtūr. But in this particular village upper caste control seems completely to have broken down (1); for no intervention came. The dispute remained limited to a widening circle of Kuruma Locality Headmen, between whom no agreement was reached. Further reference will be made to this case, but for the present it must be left to serve as an illustration of the distinction made between a Locality Headman's rights over persons and those over territory.

A Kuruma Headman elucidated these rights in the following words: "An ordinary hamlet Headman holds merely the hamlet kīle, which is made up of four things:

1. Kandam or irrigable paddy-plot, standing for the total extent of paddyfield that he golds as tenant from his landlord.
2. Panam or coin, meaning his possession of the sacred cash-box and the right to collect money for it from the congregation.
3. Katthi or knife, the right to clear and cultivate dry land in the hamlet environs.
4. Vaddi or staff, a three-foot or four-foot long staff which only an

1) A "Kōtūr Nayar" of a long-established family still lives here, but he is almost destitute and of little influence. A part in Kuruma affairs is also played by an immigrant Nayar who has acquired PTO

elder may carry, and which implies the right to speak in caste assemblies.

A Locality Headman holds all these rights in respect of his own hamlet, and also additional rights, which are:

5. Thalli and kuli, literally Drop and Bath; that is, purifying oil and washerman's mattu respectively. The distribution of these has already been described. The informant held them to be the most important of all.

6. Kunnu Yōgam or Shōgam (either term is used, and also the words karagam and kūtam, all meaning assembly or council on the ridge (kunnu). The right involved is that to summon and preside over such assemblies, at which matters affecting the Locality are discussed.

7. Inang'āchāram, or control over inangu relationships; in effect control over marriages taking place in the Locality or involving the Locality, symbolised by possession of the Keliyappan knife.

It was pointed out to the informant that none of these rights are strictly rights over territory but rather rights over persons within a territory; but he insisted on the existence of such rights, although the Headman cannot be said to own the territory. Some if not all Headmen claim rights of escheat over property left by their caste fellows in their own Localities if these die intestate and without male heirs. No established case of this ever having happened could be discovered, and it is known that in the past such escheats were made to the Nayar prince or local chief. Through his cult of the Locality god the Headman also believes himself to have rights in

Continued: land in this village, and who has connections in the Congress party. At this time he was being prosecuted for embezzlement.

the territory of his Locality. These are normally exercised only over persons within the caste, but in certain circumstances it is thought that they can be exercised, in the form of curse or blessing, against any person on that territory irrespective of caste. It seems probable that the notion of territorial rights, while always implicit in the system of traditional rights, has tended to grow in importance as the feudal system collapsed. In the past it was for the Nayar rulers of village and chiefdom to assert this right, but with the decline of the traditional property-holding system the Kuruma Headman has begun to arrogate these rights to himself where men of his own caste are concerned.

When a Kuruma immigrant intends to settle in another Locality he must sooner or later present himself before the Kuruma Headman of that Locality. Though he can obtain land and build himself a hut without the Headman's mediation, he cannot obtain spouses for his children, attend Locality assemblies, join in Locality hunts and ceremonies, remove ritual pollution from himself and his family, or invoke Locality mediation in disputes without the Headman's permission and co-operation. This at least is the ideal; divergence from it was possible for Wāriyāth because the settlement was adjacent to the parent Locality, the Headman of which was prepared to break with custom by offering his services outside his Locality limits.

These sanctions force the immigrant Kuruma coming to reside on that territory also to become of it. The immigrant changes his status from that of Outsider, man of the Chiefdom or of the Region (nātukāran) to that of man of the Locality (kunnukāran). This

change is established by the immigrant visiting the Headman and and declaring that he will become his subject. This is usually done on an occasion when the Headman's services are required, and a small money payment is made to him (one rupee or so) in addition to any payment that may be made for a specific service. In the past the Headman may have intervened on the immigrant's behalf with the Nayar landlord or his agent to secure employment or a grant of land, but this is not done nowadays.

A further stage in integration is reached when the Headman visits the immigrant after he has built his hut and cleared his land. At this visit the Headman establishes his control or rule (vidhi) over the new settlement by consulting the gods through one of his own mediums. One of these gods is the Locality god, who is establishe -d there as the "outside" (purathe) or courtyard (mittathe) god. The "inside" (agathe) gods are also consulted and established there, inside the hut which thereby becomes the Great hut, or shrine. The "inside" gods may be identical with those of the immigrants' original hamlet, deemed to have followed them there, or they may be gods of the new Locality. In the Thirty Six it was frequently found that the Locality god Kandam Puli had been established as one of the "inside" gods. I have not observed this ceremony, but it occurred more than once during the period of fieldwork, and was described by the participants. The settler thus incopporated into the Locality as a new hamlet Headman must pay a rupee to the Locality Headman and also to the Locality medium, and provide them with a meal and a drink.

The Locality Headman is the priest of the Earth of his Locality; or rather the priest of one of the local gods of the Earth. The cult of these gods is observed at the village temple, together with that of the lineage deities (female) of the Nayar landlord, and other less important gods; but the Kurumas and some other cultivating castes also have their own caste cult of the gods of the earth. At Nellivayal the god Kandam Puli is a village god worshipped in the village temple by all castes; but in terms of the Kuruma caste cult of him, he is equally a Locality god whose priest is the Locality Headman. These Locality gods are always male, which is congruent with Kuruma emphasis on rights in land being transmitted from father to son only. The matrilineal Nayar landlord regards the gods as subordinate to his own (female) lineage deities.

Through the blessing of these Locality gods, Kurumas believe the crops and herds of the Locality flourish; or, through the curse of the Locality Headman, may decline. There are usually two gods for each Locality; and their role and cult parallel in many ways those of the hamlet gods. One of the two is thought to be dominant, and by nature beneficent, while the other is subordinate to him, and used to effect his purposes. Sin and caste misconduct in the Locality may release the subordinate god from control, and reveal him as actively malevolent.

When a new hamlet is established and the gods inducted there by the Locality Headman, the dominant god among the "inside" gods is very often his own dominant Locality god, while the subordinate god or gods are nominated by the settler, and may have some with him from another Locality "in the mat", i.e. in the rolled-up bed-mats

which form part of the moveable property of every Kuruma household; or else (in a hunting metaphor) to have "followed the spoor and the blood-trail" of the migrants. The former case implies a voluntary bringing into the Locality of a particular god; the latter suggests involuntary acceptance. Sometimes a deity who was thought to have been left behind after a migration unexpectedly manifests his presence. The Locality Headman has the power either to suppress such a god, or to accept his cult.

Thus at each migration across a Locality boundary to form a new settlement, a Kuruma family tends to adopt the Locality god as their dominant House-god, but to retain the original subordinate male deity. Often, he is one of the Keliyappan gods. In Nochamvayal and the Four Taravāds the dominant god is the Locality god Kandam Puli and the subordinate god (variously called Pudhādi dēvam and Pudhādi Keliyappan) is one who followed the first settlers when they migrated here from North Wynad. This god, or Keliyappan, is also the subordinate Locality god. His role is more dynamic than that of the dominant god: he "roams about" as Kurumas say. He is thought to procure kills for hunters, to accompany brides on their way to the husband's hamlet, and to "follow the blood trail" in the sense that he is concerned (like the subordinate god of a hamlet) with the welfare of those brides and with the children they will bear. The dominant god, in contrast, is concerned with the Earth, and with the men who live on it, own or tenant it, and exploit it.

No contradiction is felt when the Locality god is inducted as a dominant House god in a hamlet. Thus, in the Thirty Six, the god Kandam Puli is not only the dominant Locality god, but is also the

dominant House god in over half of the hamlets of that Locality. Each hamlet god is peculiar to that hamlet; thus we can speak of a Nochamvayal Kandam Puli and an Atthiyūr Kandam Puli as quite distinct deities; yet they are also the same deity in a local manifestation. Such House deities are likened to "sons of the Locality god, just as the new settlers become like sons to the Locality Headman." To accept the Locality Headman's god into a hamlet as House-god is believed to make that hamlet more vulnerable to the Headman's curse, but conversely it may bring better fortune. The cult of identical gods is not a bar to intermarriage.

This pattern of selection of gods in a hamlet recently established is common but far from invariable. Some immigrants accept a completely new group of House gods, others accept none but the dominant Locality god as "outside" god. When misfortune strikes a new hamlet blame may be attached to one or more of the new gods, who may be expelled and replaced through the intervention of the Locality Headman and his more powerful deities. Sometimes, as we have said, years or even generations after the founding of a hamlet one of the gods of the parent hamlet may manifest himself there, to be either accepted or expelled by the elders. In all such changes the Locality Headman as priest of the more powerful Locality gods plays a role. He will induct any god (1) but prefers to induct his own god; he will expel any god, but not his own god. Once his Locality god is established in a hamlet as one of the House gods he is thought to exercise a

1) There are exceptions to this.

greater control over the fortunes of that hamlet. There is thus a tendency towards uniformity and towards closer control by the Locality Headman. It is said that the curse and the blessing of the Locality Headman are alike more effective when his Locality god or gods are also those worshipped in a particular hamlet.

The processes described represent the establishment of formal ties with the Locality, the recognition of the territorial authority of the Locality Headman. These ties may be strengthened by those of affinity and kinship. The new settlement may be given a girl in marriage by the Headman's hamlet, or may give or take a bride from some other hamlet within the Locality. Ideally, a bride is given from the Headman's hamlet: this does not always happen, even over a generation or two, but it is very much more likely to happen than the reverse process---that the Headman's hamlet accepts a bride from that of the new settler. Assuming, then, that it does happen (1), the assymetric quality of the tie created reinforces the subordinacy of the new hamlet as against that of the bride-giving hamlet, the Locality Headman's hamlet. In the next generation it will be populated with that Headman's "sister's sons." The model of kinship relations within a Locality is thereby established, of a bride-giving Headman's hamlet, and subordinate bride-taking hamlets.

This clarifies the role of the Locality gods seen as gods whose cult is peculiar to the caste. Their roles are analogous to those of the male House gods of a hamlet. The dominant god is concerned

1) At Nellivayal the Nochamvayal-Kālambilau patrigroup from which the Locality Headmen are drawn has given brides to most if not all the other hamlets in the neighbourhood: notably to Tōtapora and Atthiyūr, which reciprocate with inangu services.

with landed property or territory, and the persons with rights in that land. He is most closely associated with the Headman who, to some extent, mediates between the Nayar landlord and the Kuruma tenantry. The subordinate god is the god of the juniors, and of sister's sons equally with sons. Just as, in the hamlet, the Headman-elect is associated with this god, so at Locality level the subordinate god is associated with the Headman's adviser. But the Headman-elect is the Headman's brother, real or fictional, whereas the Adviser is from the Locality Headman's inangu hamlet; a matrilateral connection. In terms of this connection, Headman and Adviser may be "brothers", while at the same time they may be brothers-in-law in terms of a subsequent marriage between their hamlets. The matrilateral connection brings them into a common generation kinship system, whose maximum lateral extensions they represent: the Headman as "son" and the Adviser as "father's sister's son."

This model of a Locality in which kinship, affinity, and territory interlock, is subject to distortion. In a very small compact Locality like Avvāl, the whole group has become (or perhaps always was) an exogamous unit. In a very large Locality like the Thirty Six, the scale of the unit prevents close approximation to the model; and indeed it tends to fragment into a number of distinct caste Neighbourhoods, linked by kinship and affinity, and also by economic co-operation and the informal ties of friendship, debt, membership of hunting groups, and so on. It is to the Neighbourhood that we next turn our attention.

V. iii: Neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods are informal local associations of hamlets between whose members there is a marked degree of social and economic co-operation. I have limited my use of the term to Kuruma groups only, and indicate this limitation by using an initial capital letter. Other communities live interspersed with the Kurumas, and there is of course co-operation between them all irrespective of caste or religious affiliation; but as the caste village is distinct from the intercaste desam, so is the caste Neighbourhood from the intercaste neighbourhood. Kuruma hamlets tend to nucleate within the limits of the Locality territory in groups of from five to ten, and within these groups close economic and ritual bonds exist. Sometimes Neighbourhood and Locality coincide where the latter is small and compact, as with Avvāl and Pattacheri. The Thirty Six on the other hand, the largest of the Localities, consists of at least seven Neighbourhoods.

These Neighbourhoods appear to have grown up in the past around the house of the Nayar or Chetty landowner whose land they cultivate; and frequently take their names from his house, as has Nellivayal Neighbourhood. Other factors influencing nucleation are caste exclusiveness and the requirements of intra-caste co-operation, and nowadays the importance of the roadside bazaar of a few shops selling consumer goods, giving credit and sometimes accepting payment in kind. In the accompanying map of the Thirty Six Locality, most of the Neighbourhoods indicated are adjacent to such bazaars. In most cases, and certainly in that of Nellivayal, the bazaar is a recent creation, but its existence probably encourages new settlement nearby; and in

the past 20 years the nuclei of half-a-dozen potential new hamlets have appeared at Nellivayal, each consisting of a single conjugal family that has established itself economically, and is in process of acquiring the full ritual and political status of a hamlet.

A Neighbourhood may be designated either by the house-name of the local landowner, or that of the local bazaar, or even the name of a prominent caste settlement, some large and long-established Kuruma hamlet. As an example, Nellivayal Neighbourhood may be referred to by a Kuruma as Nellivayal, the name of the Nayar landlord's house; or as Putthenkunnu, which is the name of the local bazaar, or as Nochamvayal, the name of the principal Kuruma hamlet there.

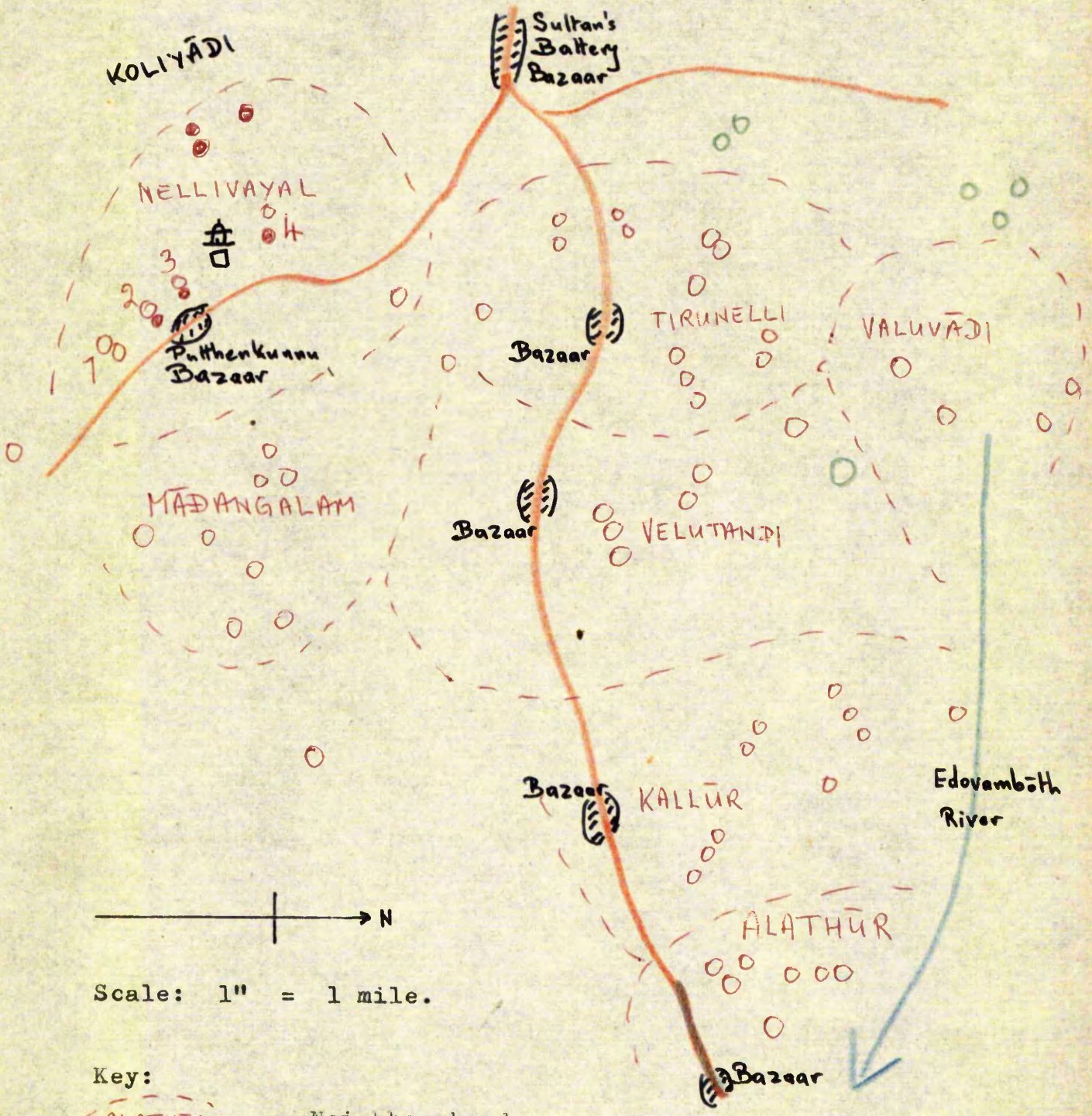
The term used by Kurumas to describe a Neighbourhood is identical with one of the terms for a Locality---kunnu, meaning "ridge", or "hill." It would not be described by the other term for a Locality ---nādu---a term with marked political connotations. Sometimes Neighbourhood and Locality coincide. Pattacherī Locality is an example. Where a Locality is large, and embraces two or more distinct caste Neighbourhoods, fission into new Localities is a possibility. But that possibility is reduced by the difficulty of securing recognition of the new unit and its Headman by the existing caste Headmen, including those of castes other than the Kurumas, and by traditional dependence on the Nayar landlord and village Headman. As has been said, all existing Headmen are or claim to be Nayar-established. There is also the problem of selecting the first Headman.

Most Neighbourhoods contain two or more patrigroups distributed over six or more hamlets. In these Neighbourhoods dominance by any

one hamlet is resented, whether it is based on relatively greater size and wealth, on priority of foundation, or on the role of local bride-giving. There is a strong egalitarian feeling between hamlets, and also between individuals when these are of different hamlets. This is reflected in kinship terminology as between matrilaterally linked hamlets. Within the hamlet, or the patrigroup, "brothers" are either elder or younger brothers: erthanmar or aniyanmar. But to a woman her brothers are collectively also angalamar, and the same term is employed in the territorial brotherhoods established by local intermarriage. A common generation system runs through matrilaterally linked hamlets in the same Neighbourhood, and relative seniority within a generation is recognised, but at the same time equivalence is claimed. Moreover the traditional economic system did not make for unequal concentrations of wealth in the hands of particular individuals or hamlets; so that no one individual or hamlet tended to emerge as Headman or Headman-supplying group. Leadership tends to be shared between several individuals, and to shift from hamlet to hamlet as old leaders die and new ones emerge.

This is so of the Neighbourhood. How then does the institutionalised leadership of the Locality Headman emerge? Intercaste relations provide the key to this, and particularly relations with the Nayar landlord and the village servants, such as the washerman. Ideally, Locality and Neighbourhood coincide. Where the Locality embraces more than one Neighbourhood, the Headman's monopoly of certain ritual services within his caste gives that Locality a fairly high degree of stability.

Plan showing hamlets and Neighbourhoods within the Thirty Six Locality.



Scale: 1" = 1 mile.

Key:

ALATHŪR = Neighbourhood

= Nellivayal Edam & temple.

= Kuruma hamlet of the Thirty Six

= Kuruma hamlet under Edūr.

= Kuruma hamlet following the rebel Headman.

1 = Nochamvayal

2 = Kālambilau & Totapora

3 = Atthiyūr

4 = Thodūti

The continued existence of the Thirty Six Locality illustrates this point. Though it includes a number of different Neighbourhoods only one of these (1) has succeeded in establishing itself as an independent unit during the past fifty years, despite its possession of a Nayar-gāmen office. Even so, this group has been unable to secure its own supply of ritual oil, and is therefore a client of the Edūr Thalachil to a degree that the Thirty Six is not.

The Thirty Six, as we have said, is the largest Kuruma Locality, and contains some 80 hamlets scattered over 40 square miles. Within it, seven distinct Neighbourhoods exist. Their membership is fairly stable because of the nucleation of hamlets around centres of cultivation, and because of the establishment of ties of kinship and economic and ritual co-operation within each Nwighbourhood. A hamlet sited midway between the nodal points of two Neighbourhoods may be able to change membership, or even enjoy a double membership; but for most hamlets, the facts of topography, economics and kinship enforce continuous membership of a single Neighbourhood, or at best a temporary dissociation.

In day to day affairs Neighbourhoods exist independently of each other, and even of the Locality. In such contingencies as marriage, ritual pollution, a complex dispute, or the celebration of such major festivals as Ucchar, they look to the Locality Headman; but he deals with these matters on a hamlet or Locality basis, and not that of Neighbourhood. He does not recognise any intermediary, a Neighbourho-od Headman as it were, between himself and the hamlets under him.

1) i.e. Nellivayal itself. Undoubtedly the fact that the Neighbourhood itself is disunited, with support polarised between two Headmen of the same patrigroup, has prolonged this process.

Alathūr Neighbourhood in the Thirty Six Locality may provide an instance of relations within a Neighbourhood, and between its hamlets and the Locality Headman. It consists of seven hamlets sited round a large cultivated clearing in the forest (1). Its name is taken from one of the largest hamlets there, and apparently the first Kuruma settlement there. This hamlet of Alathūr is an Anchappan hamlet, and has two branches adjacent, the hamlets of Mammadhamūla and Cheramūla. These three patrilaterally linked hamlets form the bride-giving group within the neighbourhood, and the founder of Atthikūni hamlet there took a bride from Cheramūla one generation ago. However, the overwhelming majority of marriages are contracted with hamlets outside the Neighbourhood or outside the Locality. All seven hamlets stand on Reserved Forest land, and cultivate their paddy holdings as tenants of the State.

Atthikūni hamlet is a branch of Lower Nochamvayal, the hamlet of the Locality Headman, and was founded about 1900 by a settler from Nochamvayal. Until 1953 its members attended major ceremonies at lower Nochamvayal, but have not visited it since then. The hamlet Headman of Atthikūni ranks third in succession to the Locality Headmanship within the Nochamvayal patrig, and in due course might have claimed that office had the termination of visiting not jeopardised or ended his right of succession. Informants at lower Nochamvayal said they had no idea why visiting had stopped, unless

1) Alathūr hamlet, of 10 huts; Mammadhamūla of 9; and Cheramūla of 5, were all founded about 1870 by Anchappans from Tālūr.
Atthikūni, of 3 huts, was founded about 1900.
Kollivimūla, Kallumukha, and Nyāmballi each consist of 3 or 4 huts, and are of diverse origins.

it was that the hamlets were inconveniently distant, or that Atthikūni felt it better to become independent at hamlet level than await the doubtful chance of succession to office at Nochamvayal. The true reason appears to be that the present Locality Headman has delegated his powers within Nochamvayal hamlet, but not to Atthikūni as well; and I was told by third parties that Nochamvayal Pōdan, fourth in succession to the office within the patrigroup, but third in line within lower Nochamvayal alone, had lost no opportunity to insult the elders of Atthikūni in order that they, by staying away from lower Nochamvayal, should forfeit their succession, and improve his own position thereby.

But though Atthikūni may be in process of severing their ties with lower Nochamvayal as members of the same patrigroup, they remain dependents as members of the Locality, and must come to Nochamvayal for purifying oil, and for the mattu provided by the Nellivayal washerman. No marriage has taken place in the hamlet since 1953, so it is uncertain whether the Locality Headman's presence would be sought for this (as it should be) or not.

The Locality Headman Pūdhan gave me this account of the Neighbourhood: "These seven houses are all under me, and all save Nyāmballi come to me for Drop (= oil) and Bath (= mattu). Nyāmballi is split into two factions, of which one adheres to me while the other takes oil from Koliyādi Locality. At one time the whole hamlet was alienated from me, after I had complained at an insult they offered my representative at a wedding there. Then I and the other hamlets combined to ostracise them; but two of the elders there had nubile daughters, and to get husbands for them they submitted to me and paid a fine, while the others still remain aloof. The other hamlets unite in

hunting and minor ceremonials, but at Ucchar they usually send representatives to my hamlet for the festival. Lately I heard that Atthikūni and one or two other hamlets there approached Edūr and offered allegiance to his Locality, but he would never dare to accept them, even if they wish to leave me!"

In fact these hamlets might "dare" to join Edūr, and he to accept their allegiance, as Koliyādi accepted that of Nyāmballi. The Headman was prompted to assert the contrary by thinking of his territorial rights and the sanctions that he could direct against such a rebellion. As priest of the Locality gods he regards himself as able to inflict supernatural punishment not only on these hamlets if they rebel, but also on any representative of Edūr who might be bold enough to visit them. A Locality Headman would be immune from such punishment while on his own territory, but vulnerable if and while he visited Atthikūni to conduct any ceremonial there. The mere supplying of oil does not involve the Headman in leaving his territory, but the celebration of a marriage does. That the two elders of Nyāmballi returned to their allegiance to the Thirty Six implies not only a difficulty in securing brides through Koliyādi Locality Headman, but also his unwillingness to enter the territory of the Thirty Six to perform a wedding ceremony there.

Neighbourhoods therefore are relatively unstable units in a political context, and form rather an aggregate of individual hamlets. For most ceremonial and for caste membership itself, the latter look to the Locality Headman---it is the individual or the hamlet, not the Neighbourhood, that is fined or ostracised. Claims to independence can be made good only when recognition is secured from

the entire local caste organisation, and Locality Headmanship is conferred by the former owners of the soil and village or Chiefdom heads, the "good Nayars". Supposing the Alathūr Neighbourhood were sited on land connected with such a person and his family, then his support might be sought; but this is not so. The local landlord is the State, in the person of the Forest Department. Nayars may and do hold positions in this Department, but they do not come into the category of "good Nayar", in the sense of holding office in the traditional political system. The Wynad Chetties would appear to be acceptable substitutes, since many are considerable landholders and claim "Wynad Nayar" status, but in fact play little part in Locality affairs. Certainly no established Locality Headman admits that his office was created by a Chetty, or that a Chetty has power to intervene in caste affairs, as the Nayars have.

In these circumstances we find that conflict within a Locality is likely to express itself either in an attempt to replace the Headman by a junior from the same hamlet, or from the same patrigroup but a different hamlet, as at Pattachēri; or else to form a new Locality by fission within the old. The Headman of this new Locality is, or claims to be, a member of the patrigroup traditionally invested with the right to provide Locality Headman by the local Nayar. This situation is now in existence at Nellivayal; and at Alathūr, supposing that Neighbourhood were to attempt to establish itself as a new Locality, the connection of Atthikūni with lower Nochamvayal might give it as strong a claim to provide the office as the the bride-giving senior hamlet of Alathūr itself.

Were the Kurumas an isolated tribal society, we could assume that Neighbourhood and Locality would everywhere tend to coincide, but with rivalry for the Headman's office tending to divide the nuclear, bride-giving patrigroup; especially where this was dispersed through a number of hamlets, as is the case at Nellivayal. But Kuruma membership of a local caste system, and their traditional dependence as tenants on Nayar landholders and political heads tends to inhibit the free operation of such a system. Alathūr, having no Nayar patron, is the less likely to secede from the Thirty Six; and their procurement of oil from Koliyādi or from Edūr to remain either threats, or to be carried out only by individuals or single hamlets---and that as a temporary measure. The Seven under Baradhan have actually seceded from the Thirty Six as a client group of Edūr, and in doing so they have split the Nellivayal Locality. That this should have happened must in part be attributed to the existence of two Nayar-given offices within the nuclear patrigroup. But Baradhan has still not got his oil-bottle; and we may suppose that in the next generation Neighbourhood unity may still reassert itself. The critical role in a reconciliation would probably be played by the inangu hamlets of Atthiyūr and Tōtapora which have connections with both the Nochamvayals and Kālambilau.

V iv: Kinship, ritual, and economic co-operation in the Locality.

In this section I shall discuss the main forms of co-operation within the Locality. These are not primarily economic, but have an economic content. Hunting, for example, is a form of Locality co-operation whose economic importance has sharply declined concurrently with an increase in population and a decline in the total forested area of Wynad. But it also has ritual significance, and remains one of the principal Kuruma social activities. It is also an important field of authority for the Locality Headman, by whose permission (direct or indirect) all hunting is carried out.

The territory of each Locality is the hunting-ground for the members of that Locality, and they must restrict themselves to it save when pursuing game that was started within its limits. Each hunt organised and led by the Locality Headman serves to reassert his rights over the Locality earth. Each animal caught is deemed to have been killed not only by individual skill and common effort, but also by the Headman's prayers to the Locality gods, whose priest he is. Every kill is therefore the gift of those gods.

Success in hunting is therefore a means of determining the will of the gods in any disputed matter. Most major decisions and positional changes are associated with hunts, the results of which confirm them or caste doubt on their correctness. The gods are consulted through mediums, but their advice and promises are viewed sceptically, and the congregation or individual members of it

often demand material confirmation in the form of a successful hunt. Thus when Atthiyūr Kallu consulted the gods about his illness he was sceptical of their promises of a speedy recovery, and retorted: "Well God, if you are so powerful, send me 300 lbs of meat by the Vishu festival!" (1).

All men, or almost all men engage in hunting, which is practised as essentially a group activity, though individuals may spend an afternoon seeking birds or hares for the pot. The skilled and lucky hunter is highly respected among Kurumas, but since beating the game towards the "gunns" is an essential part of the process there are plenty of roles for even the least able in jungle craft. The tradition of hunting connects the Kurumas of today with their remoter past---the term "Vēdan" means a hunter---and the modern Kurumas if asked for their caste occupation are more likely to give it as hunting than as cultivation. Despite diminishing rewards in the form of game much time is still expended in the pursuit.

Men only engage in hunting, and women are not supposed to touch either the weapons of the hunter or the kill he brings home until it has been skinned and dissected. When the men are away on a hunt the women of a hamlet are supposed to remain indoors or at least within the compound until they return, lest evil befall the hunters. Regular hunting is regarded as essential for good health and psychological normality in a man, and for this reason even old and infirm men sometimes accompany a hunting party. Fishing coversely is woman's

1) Compare Mary Douglas on the Lele of Kasai; African Worlds, 1954, p. 15.

work, though men sometimes join in.

It has been emphasised that the Kurumas have a number of legends but no myths. To this generalisation there is one exception, a myth of hunting. It relates that, in the Vēdan past, women also hunted, though separately from men. One day a party of these Amazons killed a deer and began to cut it up into shares. Division of the meat led to a fierce quarrel among them. First a pregnant woman claimed a double share, one being for her unborn child; then a widow demanded a double share so that she might offer meat to her husband's ghost; finally all the women joined in, disputing these claims or advancing their own. As a result of this disagreement women, it is said, have been forbidden to hunt ever since (1).

One possible significance of the myth is an emphasis on the values of the patrilocal group, whose solidarity is threatened by women and by the principle of matrilineal descent. In hunting, as in the hamlet, amity and co-operation are emphasised; and Kurumas say "When we go hunting, all quarrels between us are forgotten." Women, it is believed, cannot organise themselves, nor suppress their tendency to quarrel; therefore they were excluded from hunting, which in turn implies a male dominance succeeding on a prior equality of status between the sexes.

Hunting also forms a field for exhibiting caste co-operation and caste differentiation. In feudal times all hunting rights were vested in the landowners and Chieftains of the dominant caste, who might delegate them to others. Restriction of huntigg rights among

1) This myth is known to every Kuruma, and the site of the quarrel is still shown in central Wynad, near Edakkal.

the Kurumas to Locality territory probably derives from restriction to the land controlled by individual Nayar chiefs and intercaste village Headmen. When any game was taken it could not be divided on the spot, but must be carried back to the Nayar's house or to certain public skinning-places (pappe) traditionally appointed. Skinning and dissection were begun by the Locality Headman as representative of the Nayar, or even by the Nayar himself, or one of his family.

In feudal times the Raja, or rather the royal lineage, in theory owned all land; and land held by other families in the kingdom escheated to the Raja if those families died out. Hunting was therefore a concern of the Raja as well as of the Nayar Headmen. In this connection it was said that:

> "Long ago the Nellivayal Headman had to go every year to the Raja's palace at Koliyādi (1) to get permission to organise hunts, and we also had to get permission from the landlord. But nowadays we can hunt where we like in the Locality except in the Reserve Forest."

This permission was taken at Ōnam (in September), one of the major festivals of Kerala, and was followed by a hunt at Puthiri (in October) in which the Nayar himself and his household would join. Such an event is described by C. Gopalan Nair in his little book (2). The event he describes took place fifty years ago, and even then Nayar participation was only nominal. Today it seems to have terminated completely, as does the custom of presenting to the Nayar landlord a share (a leg) of

1) The site of this palace, owned by the Kurumbranād Rajas who ruled South Wynad, is still extant, but no buildings remain.

2) op. cit. p. 157.

each major animal killed. Today at Nellivayal a small portion of meat from a kill is sometimes presented to the landlord's Nayar agent, but not often. The Headman must always provide meat for the annual offering of food to the landlord's taravād Ancestor spirits (in January), but as game is so rare a fowl is usually substituted.

In former times hunting was also an aristocratic pursuit favoured by the Nayars, who brought it to a pitch of elaborated observances comparable with those surrounding venery in fifteenth century Europe. Hunting was a sport analogous to warfare; it implied skill in the use of weapons and extensive territorial rights, and therefore was restricted to the dominant caste and to those closely associated with it in a subordinate but not servile status. In Wynad therefore we find that Chetties, Kuricchiyas, Padhiyas and Kurumas all practise hunting, which castes below the Kurumas do not. Hunting therefore carries prestige in terms of the traditional system, though Sanskritic values, and perhaps on the whole the secular values of modern India discourage it.

Possession of a gun, and better still of a jeep, whose headlights will draw the game from the roadside jungle to an easy killing, imply wealth and confer prestige; but this sport is for the individual rather than the group. If Nayars and Chetties still hunt today, they do so individually; and the Padhiyas hunt but rarely. The only communal hunting in which Padhiyas and Chetties still join is for the tiger which has killed men or cattle. Paniyas, as we have said, never hunt; although an individual Paniya armed with a bow will occasionally join a Kuruma hunt of no great ceremonial importance.

Kuruma hunting remains a group activity in which the dog and the bow and arrow are still the chief instruments of success. Criticism of it within the caste is not common, and when it is made it is in terms of monetary interest rather than modern Sanskritism with its emphasis on non-violence and a vegetable diet; a man who is out hunting is a man who is not working. One prosperous Kuruma who eschews hunting and spends all his time tilling his land remarked: "If everyone went hunting we should have to eat dirt for food."

The usual Kuruma hunting group is of a dozen to twenty men, of whom two or three will have guns (1) and the remainder bows and arrows. A few will have dogs, but these should not be too numerous or they will get out of control. At major festivals hunts may be on a larger scale, and up to a hundred men may take part in them, though so large a group is unwieldy, and the shares of meat proportionately smaller. The group is controlled by a single man, who may be the Headman or a skilled senior. He divides up the group into beaters and "guns", and leads them to the covert or section of jungle to be beaten. Here the "guns" line up upon an open patch of ground or along the line of a crest or stream while the beaters and dogs flush the covert and drive the game towards them.

The object of a hunt may be one or all of three things: to secure meat, to protect cattle or crops from tigers or wild pig, and to test the power and attitude of the gods in respect of a particular matter. The kill, if the hunt is made with the latter object in view,

1) Most Kuruma-owned guns, nominally licensed only for crop-protection, are muzzle-loaders, but there is now quite a number of breech loaders too. A rich Kuruma is proud to possess a gun, especially a breech-loader, even if he himself never hunts.

is referred to as nēre, meaning truth, witness, or evidence. It is the gift of the gods to the hunters and the community from which they are drawn as much as the rewards of their skill and persistence. In these days of game shortage even the humblest kill is deemed to be an "evidence"; elders say: "If there is blood upon the earth, even a hare is nēre!" This was not so in the past, when certain animals were associated with particular Locality gods. Sambhur and mature wild pig were "evidence" from the dominant Locality god, while jungle goats and smaller game were associated with the subordinate god. Not all kills are necessarily "evidence" nor all failures to kill regarded with alarm. This depends upon the circumstances under which the hunt was organised, and also on the season of the year.

For the hunter there are three seasons. From Puthiri (October) to Ucchār (in February) is the period of frequent Locality hunts, or villi nāyāth, villi meaning a call or summons and nāyāth (hunting) literally dog-play. This is followed by the season of "beggar's hunting" (erruppu nāyāth), when small groups of hunters drawn from hamlet or neighbourhood may hunt at will without prior permission from the Locality Headman. "When a party of us then go on a hunt we refer to it (deprecatingly) as "bird-shooting" (pakki-eyya)." The third season, from Vishu to Puthiri again, is the monsoon period of ploughing, sowing, and crop-watching. No hunting is done during this period save when deer or pig molest the young crops. A kill got in this season does not count as "evidence", and one got in "beggar's hunting" is less important than one from a Locality hunt. Locality

hunts may be contingent, but are regularly held to mark the "Five festivals" (anche kṟīya) of Vishu, Ōnam, Puthiri, Mandalam, and Ucchār. There is not a prohibition on hunting during the monsoon, but it is obviously a bad time for large-scale operations. There are also religious reasons against it. In the rainest month (Karkidagam) all male territorial gods in Wynad are said to assemble on an island in the Kabbani river in North Wynad "for instruction by the guru Pākanār." It is felt wrong to disturb them at such a time by prayers for successful hunting, "though they must come if we call."

The days of the week are also apportioned as propitious or unpropitious for hunting. Sunday, Friday and Tuesday are most likely to yield a kill, and they are described as being difficult or "sharp" days (kaduppam). The best day for hunting is Friday since (it is said) this is associated with the goddess Karengāli, who is fond of blood and blood sacrifice. She is not however associated with hunting by the Kurumas apart from this verbal reference.

A hunt consists of three main operations: the assembling, the actual hunting, in which covert after covert is beaten, and the disposal of the kill. Assembly is either at a pre-arranged rendezvous for a large-scale hunt, or in the hamlet courtyard if only members of a single hamlet are taking part. The Headman blesses the hunt from the verandah of the Great hut, and prays silently to the gods, explaining to them the desire of the group if the hunt has a special purpose. A further prayer is said at the rendezvous by the Headman or leader of the hunt to the Locality god and his subordinate deity: "Let the anthill become a stag and the boulder become a boar!" Every

hunter must strip to the waist as a sign of ritual respect, and remain so during the hunt; though this condition has been relaxed for those armed with guns, who usually wear shirts in order to carry ammunition in the shirt pocket. During the period of approach those hunters with bows string them and, setting an arrow to the string, draw it taut and aim it first up in the air and then down at the ground without discharging it. This is done in the direction in which the party is going, and is said to be a mark of respect to the ghosts of two Vēdans who were killed when hunting.

If a kill is made the beast is tied to a pole and carried home, either to a traditional skinning place (nappe), or to the edge of the gardens outside the home hamlet, where it is dissected. Sometimes when the kill is a large one and the supposed evidence of divine favour or intervention in a dispute, the whole carcase is carried into the Great hut and left there overnight. It is taken out again to the hamlet outskirts for dissection in the morning, under the direction of the Headman of the leader of the hunt. First the liver is removed, and roasted for a moment over a fire of twigs. It is then cut into pieces and shared by the hunters, the senior hunter eating first. Two small pieces are wrapped in green leaves and thrown away into the waste land or jungle as an offering either to unspecified and malignant "jungle spirits" or to the ghosts of the two Vēdan hunters.

Every hunter gets one share of meat and the killer---that is, the hunter whose arrow first pierced the animal's hide---in addition gets

a foreleg and may keep the hide if he wishes. If the hunt was a casual one the killer also gets the head, but if it was a ceremonial or Locality hunt the head goes to the Headman instead. A ceremonial meal (thaleyūte) is made of it, the head being first placed in the roof of the Great hut, then cooked and the curry offered to the Ancestor spirits of the Headman's lineage. The skull is often preserved thereafter as an emblem of success, to be buried with the Headman when he dies. In each successful Locality hunt a special share is reserved for the Locality Headman and medium, and in casual hunts the hamlet Headman also gets a share. In wedding and funeral hunts there is no sharing of meat, the entire quantity being pooled for the wedding or funeral feast.

Success in hunting is one of the factors that determine the prestige and degree of authority of a Locality Headman. The gods send kills as "evidence" but the Headman must first pray for them as the intermediary between deity and community. His policy must therefore appear just and consistent to gods and men, and must be phrased or argued in such a way as to appear cogent. Lack of success in ceremonial hunts (1) is thought to be causal not fortuitous, and to reflect the incompetence or misconduct of the Headman. This also applies to hunts at hamlet level. In 1955 for example Shankaran of Upper Nochamvayal complained in these terms of the incompetence of his hamlet Headman Chickanan: "We saw a wild pig at Pātavayal when we were hunting there, but it eluded us. This

1) By this I mean hunts intended to secure "evidence". Logically these should embrace the hunts at the "Five Festivals" which indicate the general future prospects of the Locality, but in practice the latter are usually formal affairs nowadays.

was because our Headman and māyā are not co-operating properly; the māyā sends us our kills, but our Headman cannot control it properly. We shall question him about it at the seance due tomorrow morning!"

Māyā is a Sanskrit term meaning illusion, or unreality, and one of several Sanskrit terms familiar to Kuruma elders. The informant really meant the dominant god and his kothi. Under the control of the Locality Headman, any hamlet Headman (and indeed any hunter) may pray to the dominant god to grant success in a hunt; but cannot control the god as the Locality Headman can.

The informant was from upper Nochamvayal, a hamlet claiming to supply the Headman of the Seven, but which had lost that office to the hamlet of Kālambilau. The occasion of this particular hunt was a wedding in upper Nochamvayal, or rather a projected wedding. The informant's disquiet sprang less from failure to kill the pig, than from a feeling that his Headman was mishandling hamlet affairs. Not only had he failed to regain the Headship of the Seven, but at this time had offended the Headman of lower Atthiyūr which, as inangu hamlet, had to provide the Third man for the wedding. The Atthiyūr Headman insisted on a visit of apology before he would provide a Third man; and the Nochamvayal Headman, bribed or badgered by the girl's father and mother, agreed to this----to the annoyance of many other members of the hamlet, who felt that the prestige of their hamlet suffered thereby. The incident of the unsuccessful hunt therefore focussed this concern, and provided a supposed supernatural consequence of the humiliation, which could be interpreted as showing

divine displeasure with the Headman who thus humbled himself.

At the seance referred to, the Headman Chickanan replied to criticism from his juniors, to the effect that they were failing to unite behind him, but without making specific charges. The dominant god made a similar accusation. The congregation then promised unity in the future, and a cash collection was taken. Offering this to the gods, the Headman entreated them to send "evidence" before the wedding-day, and staked his reputation on one being got. Another hunt was held a few days later, and a large "jungle goat" (kātādu) was killed.

This restored the Headman's reputation, and for several days he was in ecstasies of pride and delight. But the "evidence" was not entirely satisfactory to all. Those elders most critical of Chickanan's ability complained that the animal was the "evidence" of the subordinate god only, whereas a deer, associated with the dominant god, should really have been secured. This, they argued, showed that the Headman-elect rather than the Headman was the recipient of divine favour. The Headman of the inangu hamlet of Atthiyūr, whose juniors had taken part in the hunt, interpreted the evidence as showing that the credit was really due to himself, since the subordinate god is associated with those hamlets to which brides have been given, as well as with the juniors of his own hamlet.

The prestige of a Locality Headman is even more closely involved with success in hunting than is that of a hamlet Headman; but success is measured in many ways. It may mean many kills, or it

may mean few kills but still fewer disappointments. When hunters encounter no game at all, then chance may bear the blame; but if an animal is seen but escapes, and still more if it is wounded but escapes, and most of all if it injures or kills one of the hunters, then the Headman is blamed. But his personality, and the extent to which he can control his followers also affect the position. When a Headman is regarded as incomptent, or his followers are riven by faction, then every mishap and success are analysed and interpreted; and even partial success may be seen as partial failure, as in the hunting incident at Nochamvayal just related. On the other hand an able man like Baradhan of Kālambilau, generally recognised as leader of the Seven (1), has a reputation for successful hunting, even though statistically his hunting expeditions are no more successful than those of other Headmen. This reputation is due to his control over and encouragement of his followers rather than to the number and weight of kills actually made.

We have already given some account of the Seven hamlets and their relation to the Thirty Six Locality---from which they now claim independence. A Nayar-given office vested in the Seven, called the Kapala or Gateway Headmanship (2) was held by upper Nochamvayal until the time of Marikyan. The office passed to Kālambilau after Marikyan had been expelled from the Great hut by his juniors in circumstances similar to those of Edaḷkal Vulli (3). The leader of those juniors was the Chickanan mentioned above. His leadership

1) The actual Headman of the Seven in Baradhan's uterine elder brother Baranan, a quiet man who delegates much business to Baradhan.
2) I.e. Gatekeeper to the Nayar Edam. 3) See above, p. 193f.

derived from seniority rather than personal ability, and he proved incapable of retaining the office. The crucial event in his failure was a hunt in which, soon after his replacement of Marikyan, he led the men of the Seven hamlets.

In this hunt a wild boar was seen and wounded, but it managed to elude the hunters. On their return they consulted the god, who assured them that a kill would be made on the follwwing day. The medium who personated this god was one of the leaders of the move to expel Marikyan and replace him by Chickanan. His prophecy proved tragically correct. The hunters returned to the forest and searched for the wounded boar. Before they were aware of it, the desparate creature charged them, and inflicted upon the medium a wound which proved mortal within a few hours. This tragedy so alarmed Chickanan as the leader of the hunt that he refused to undertake his newly acquired office of Headman of the Seven. With the Nayar janmi's consent, this thereupon passed to the next most senior man in the patrigroup, Baradhan (or Baranan) of Kālambilau.

This patrigroup is dispersed over several hamlets, all with identical trios of Housegods, Kandam Puli being the dominant god. One of these hamlets is lower Nochamvayal, whose Headman is also Headman of the Thirty Six. Baradhan's supporters in the Seven argue that his success in hunting shows divine favour for his pretensions, just as the death in the hunt showed divine disapproval of the claim of Chickanan to succeed the ostracised Marikyan. But Baradhan's opponents, whether those in upper Nochamvayal who resent loss of an office, or those in the Thirty Six who resent his claim that the Seven is a separate Locality, say he is "tricking the gods." The

basis of their argument is that the Seven remains part of the Thirty Six and subordinate to its Headman. Baradhan's assumption of the office coupled with his disregard of the Thirty Six Headman have created disorder in both the human and the supernatural systems, so that the subordinate god has left the control of the dominant god. As the former is the being which procures kills in hunting, every new success in hunting by the Seven, and every failure by the Thirty Six seem to underline this argument. Its exponents, and notably Murugan of Tōtapora (1), aver that Baradhan "favours" the subordinate god, and continually "tricks" the dominant god Kandam Puli by praying to him for success in hunting, and vowing money in return; yet when the subordinate god "brings" him kills, he refuses to pay the dominant god the promised money, but urges him instead to seek payment from the Headman of the Thirty Six, "since he is the real Locality Headman, not I." Whether this is what Baradhan really does or not, it is what the elders of the Thirty Six believe he does.

Fully to understand this alleged conduct by Baradhan, we must examine the relations between Kālambilau and the two Nochamvayals. We have described them as hamlets whose members belong to a single patrigroup, though each has its own hamlet Headman and cult of gods and Ancestors. The seniormost living man in the patrigroup is Pūdhan the Headman of lower Nochamvayal and of the Thirty Six Locality. Next in genealogical seniority come Chickanan of upper Nochamvayal and then Kālambilau Baranan and Baradhan. If, then, the office of Headman of the Seven is to pass freely within the patrigroup, it

1) Thirty Six Locality medium, and since 1954, Locality adviser.

should be held by lower Nochamvayal Pudhan, and not by either Chickanan or Baradhan. In fact Pūdhan has laid claim to the office, but less because he desires to assume it, than to take it away from Baradhan, and perhaps then delegate it to Chickanan as his client. But such a claim also implies that the Thirty Six Headmanship could succeed within the patrigroup, and that, on Pūdhan's death, Chickanan or Baradhan might claim to succeed him. Pūdhan therefore has not pressed his claim, and his putative successors in lower Nochamvayal have emphasised from time to time that the Thirty Six Headmanship is vested in their hamlet and not in the wider patrigroup. Thus at the same time they claim a monopoly of an office they hold, yet deny another hamlet the monopoly of an office of a similar nature. The key to this paradox lies in the shifting nature of the relations between hamlets within a patrigroup, and potentially also between adjacent matrilaterally linked hamlets which have ceased to intermarry yet retain a common generation system.

Lower Nochamvayal is the oldest Kuruma settlement on the ridge, and all other hamlets in the patrigroup are declared to be branches from it. All observe exogamy and have cults of identical gods. Yet elders of the Seven call in question the patrigroup membership of lower Nochamvayal, and some declare that it is no longer one of the Four taravāds. They say that it became extinct four generations ago, and was refounded by a woman of the Four taravāds and her son. If this were so, it offers a possible explanation of why the Thirty Six Headmanship does not circulate in the Four taravāds, but at the same

time it inhibits lower Nochamvayal from claiming the Seven Headship. Lower Nochamvayal elders admit that their hamlet became at one time depopulated, but deny it became extinct. They say that the refounding was by a widow and her son, and that the son was in fact the child of a deceased man of lower Nochamvayal. Thus continuity of descent and succession in the patrigroup are maintained. But the genealogy does not extend far enough upwards for anyone to be able to say more than this, and to do more than take up one position or the other. Kinship is a political as much as a genealogical fact. The assertion that Baradhan "favours" the subordinate god acquires significance in these terms. We have said that the subordinate god, whether of Locality or hamlet, is linked with sister's sons equally with sons (as juniors). Baradhan's supporter in another of the Four taravāds, East Thodūti Vulli, is also said to "favour" the subordinate god, and even give him precedence ovef Kandam Puli. These statements by their opponents imply fission in the patrigroup, seen as a change of a patrilateral link between hamlets to a matrilateral one, though this is implicit rather than explicit.

Whereas a disaster in hunting broke Chickanan's self-confidence, success may increase it, and the support a Headman enjoys. The present Kotur Thalachil succeeded to office in 1948, when he was challenged by a rival candidate within the same patrigroup. The gods, through a medium, declared in favour of the present Thalachil, but confirmation was sought in a Locality hunt. On this hunt a boar was seen and wounded, but it escaped. My informant went on: "The whole country (nādu) was agog with the news, saying that if

the boar was killed, the new Thalachil Kālan would be vindicated; but that if it escaped, the rival candidate would persist in his claim, and the patrigroup would split. For seven days Kālan and his juniors sought the wounded boar. At last they found and killed it, and every Kuruma applauded the feat!"

This enthusiastic account of the event came from Tōtapora Kēlan's son Mādhan, whose sister is married to the Thalachil. The talk of "seven days" is an exaggeration, but other accounts show the story to be essentially true. Mādhan went on:

"The two contenders for the office both took part in the hunt, which showed there was no serious rift between them. Kālan had been chosen publicly by the god as the new Thalachil, but had the boar escaped, or been killed by his rival Poleyan or his sons, then the latter would seem to be the real possessors of the god's favour. But it was a man of Kālan's own hamlet who killed the boar, so there could be no further doubt about the god's choice."

No doubt in the tension surrounding such a hunt, success would mean a real fillip to the self-confidence of the new Headman and his supporters. To Nochamvayal Chickanan misfortune meant the opposite; and those who had known him all his life declared that his personality seemed to be completely changed by the event.

Factional leanings are often displayed in the choice of hunting party. Lower Atthiyūr was a member of the Seven, but left it at about the time upper Nochamvayal did so (1). The hamlet Headman Vullan has fobidden his juniors to hunt with the Seven, whereas the Headman-elect Vulli opposed this policy. During the dispute between them, the hunting activities of the juniors provided a crude barometer to the relative success of either leader in claiming their support. Once Vullan complained to me:

1) PTO.

1) Strictly speaking, Atthiyūr and upper Nochamvayal did not leave the Seven but merely Baradhan's faction. Thus both factions claim to represent the Seven. Upper Nochamvayal and lower Atthiyur admit their subordinacy to the Thirty Six and do not claim to be an independent Locality, whereas Baradhan is making this claim, and seeking to enforce it by securing an oil-bottle and hunting territory. He hunts within Thirty Six territory, but makes a point of ensuring that his hunting parties never conflict with those of the Thirty Six Headman.

"Today my own sons have gone to hunt with the Seven! I was not suprised that that rascal Vullikan went, but it is hard that my own blood should join him!"

We have referred to Vullikan of Atthiyūr as a supporter of the Seven under Baradhan's leadership; but the quotation also contains a sneer against the fact that he was not born in Atthiyūr, and therefore, though a member by affiliation, is less likely to obey his Headman than other members. The participation of Vullan's own sons was probably motivated less by their political sympathies than by the fact that the hunt was arranged to secure a wild pig seen the previous day in a particular covert; and that therefore the chance of securing meat was greater than usual. That their participation was possible at all emphasises the marginal position of Atthiyūr between the rival factions of Seven and Thirty Six.

It is traditionally inangu to the whole Four Taravāds, but has actually taken brides from only two of them: three from upper Nochamvayal, and one from lower Nochamvayal. It is regarded therefore as having a peculiarly close relation with upper Nochamvayal; and since the two hamlets broke with Baradhan, they have continued to hunt together and to reciprocate ritual services, such as supplying the Third man for a wedding. These services are reciprocal, as is the use of the term inangu, and not (like bride-giving) unilateral. But, as is to be expected, faction or even fission between hamlets within the patrigroup

to which it is inangu, tends to involve disunity in the inangu hamlet also. We should expect this to be stronger had Atthiyūr also accepted brides in the past from Kālambilau. A like situation exists in Tōtapora, also traditionally inangu to the whole Nochamvayal patrigroup, and now divided between those who support Kālambilau and those who support Nochamvayal.

The composition of hunting groups indicates neighbourhood, ties of allegiance, as to a Locality Headman, and ties of kinship or affinity. A man cannot join a hunting group (save by permission), unless he can indicate that he has some claim to membership. The operation is an ordered operation, and special roles are assigned in major hunts to the Locality Headman and his Adviser. The former controls the entire hunt, or sends a deputy to do so; and he is assisted in this by his Adviser, who normally is Headman of the inangu hamlet, or the principal inangu hamlet. (1) When the hunters are advancing in line through jungle, the former leads the right of the line and his Adviser the left. When the group divides into beaters and "guns", the Locality Headman (at least in theory) controls the "guns", while his Adviser leads the beaters. Success or failure in a hunt are related, as we have seen, to the ability of the Headman, interpreted in terms of divine favour and his power to "control" the gods; and also to the degree of co-operation and amity that exists between himself and his Adviser.

1) At Nellivayal today Totapora provides the Adviser and inangu services for lower Nochamvayal, lower Atthiyur those of upper Nochamvayal, and upper Atthiyūr those of Kālambilau.

Major positional changes are marked by a hunt organised at the appropriate level. When a new hamlet Headman is inducted, he is expected to lead the men of his hamlet, and those of the inangu hamlet, on a hunt. Similarly for the new Locality Headman or Thalachil, the relative success of the hunt being thought to show the abilities and future prospects of the new office-holder. At a girl's maturity ceremony a hamlet hunt is held, and at each virgin marriage a series of hunts link the participant groups.

The first hunt of such a series falls two days before the wedding day, and is called the Affine's hunt (bandhū nāyāth); for on this day the sisters and maternal uncles arrive with their spouses at the hamlets of bride and groom. Next day is the Assembly hunt (ālugūdal nāyāth), in which men of the inangu hamlets and Neighbourhood take part. On the wedding day is the Bridesman's hunt (pennugar nāyāth), and a Groom's hunt (manamālan nāyāth) is held from the bride's hamlet when the pair first visit it. Each such hunt secures meat, occupies the guests, indicates the auspiciousness of the occasion, and also establishes or vindicates hunting rights. Thus the bridegroom acquires hunting rights (as an individual) in his wife's natal Locality; the visiting affines can enjoy rights they acquired previously in a similar way.

There is no hunt in the groom's hamlet corresponding to that held for him in the bride's hamlet, but the new bride takes part in a fishing expedition, led by the hamlet Headwoman. The woman of a hamlet and its inangu also fish after each funeral ceremony, when they "catch" the spirit of the dead person and "bring it up out of the water." It can then be installed as an Ancestor spirit in the

Great hut by the hamlet Headman (1).

These hunts are not Locality hunts in the sense that they are organised or led by the Locality Headman, but they are held with his permission and on his territory. They are held only for virgin marriages (as a rule), and these require both his assent and his presence. Where Neighbourhood and Locality coincide, the hunting party on the second and third days does coincide with the average composition of a Locality hunt; but in large Localities like the Thirty Six it is representative only of the Neighbourhood of the hamlet where the wedding is to take place, plus those affines who have been invited.

Locality hunts precede the "Five Festivals" which mark the passing of the year. The principal one of these is the Ucchār festival in mid-February. It marks the end of harvest, and is the time by which debts and leases must be settled or renewed. It is also the occasion for renewal by his followers of their allegiance towards a particular Locality Headman. The festival lasts three days, during which no labour may be done, granaries must be closed, and the Earth (bhūmi) is said to menstruate.

The Ucchār hunt starts from a traditional rendezvous central to the Locality; and every hamlet is expected to send a representative there. At this assembly point the Headman announces any arrangements for the future, and closes his oil-bottle accounts for the year. Those who have taken his oil but not yet paid for it, must do so now.

1) This is probably an all-Malabar belief. Hutton says that, when a Zamorin died, all fishing in the kingdom was suspended for three days until his ghost had been similarly 'caught.' "Caste in India", 1946, p. 225.

The Headman is then prepared to settle with the oil Nayar on bottle-washing day. While the accounts are checked, young archers practise their skill at targets until it is time for the hunt to move off. Those Ucchār hunts I witnessed seem to show that this particular hunt is primarily ceremonial, since it begins only after noon, and ends after two or three coverts have been beaten. But it remains the most important single hunt in the year, when every hamlet in the Locality is expected to send a man to the rendezvous as an expression of continued allegiance (1), and when fathers allow their growing sons to accompany them on a hunt for the first time.

Hunting is not a field for intercaste co-operation, and tradition makes it peculiarly the caste activity of the Kurumas alone in South and central Wynad, as it is that of the Kuricchiyas in North Wynad. But the Nayar as the traditional landowner and political head is still nominally allowed to have some control over Kuruma hunting parties at Locality level; and in feudal times no doubt this control was very real. Vestiges of it remain in the right of the Edam (or landowner's house) to a foreleg of every deer killed in the Locality, and the statement that annual permission to hunt had to be taken from the Nayar by the Locality Headman. Neither duty is now observed in South Wynad, though they seem only fairly recently to have fallen into desuetude.

1) The Thirty Six Locality Ucchār hunts that I attended attracted about 100 hunters, representing 40 to 50 hamlets. The Headman grumbled about those unrepresented, but made excuses for them when I pressed the question of why they were absent, by saying that they were perhaps suffering ritual pollution of some kind.

This contrast between the negative role of the Nayar janmi at the present day, and the importance of his traditional role as the Chiefdom or village head who conferred and annually confirmed the hunting rights of a Kuruma Locality Headman, are typical of the whole range of Kuruma-Nayar relations. In the traditional past he was the giver of land and office, the referee in disputes, the giver of judgement, and often its executioner as well. For the reasons given in Chapter II most of these powers have been lost, and the families wielding them broken up, but the Nayar janmi remains a figure of great symbolic importance. He is still thought of as a representative of the Nayar invaders from Kottayam, who massacred the Vēdans and, by intermarriage with four surviving females, established the four matriclans and organised caste custom.

More importantly, the present-day territorial organisation into Localities is attributed to the Nayars; and each Locality Headman looks to a particular Nayar janmi still as his overlord. At Nellivayal, though the Kidāv is an absentee, he must still confirm the Thirty Six and Seven Headmen in office when there is a change of personnel. His ancestors established these two offices, as a historical fact; and now that there is a dispute over possession of one of them, the janmi is asked to intervene to settle it. Kālambilau and upper Nochamvayal each ask for his decision, and from lower Nochamvayal the Thirty Six Headman asks him to confirm that the Seven is not an independent Locality but a group subordinate to his office and part of his Locality.

These offices were first given and since confirmed from the Nellivayal temple, which stands near the site of the landlord's house. It remains in his possession, though most of his other lands have passed out of his hands, and is in regular use still. For major ceremonies, a Tamil Brahmin attends, but for everyday ceremonies the janmi's resident Nayar agent acts as priest, while Kurumas form the greater part of the congregation. It consists of two parts: an upper and a lower temple. The upper contains the shrine of the family goddess, and is in use only when the janmi pays his occasional visit. The lower temple however is in constant use; and it contains the shrine of the territorial god Kandam Puli. The cult of this god therefore links Nayar and Kuruma at Locality level. The Nayar cult of this territorial god in his own temple can be regarded as an expression of his (traditional) secular control over the territory of the Locality (1) and those who inhabit and exploit it. The local Kurumas have also their own cult of this god at Locality level, and many hamlets have adopted him as the dominant deity among the House-gods. They recognise his connection with the janmi by describing him as a koima dēvam or Chieftain-given god, but do not thereby envisage him as an instrument of control over themselves, but rather the contrary. The god is just; and, as a junior in a hamlet can appeal to the god against an unjust Headman or elder, so can a Kuruma tenant appeal to Kandam Puli against oppression by the janmi.

1) The god is one of several major village (dēsam) gods, including Kāli mala devam, also a common House-god among the local Kurumas. Both these gods have shrines at Nellivayal temple; but Kandam Puli takes precedence as the god of the Locality Headman.

The Locality medium also acts as Temple medium for these gods at Nellivayal temple, and when personating the gods there, including Kandam Puli, can give vent to popular discontent over a particular matter, or openly criticise the landlord or his Nayar agent.

Disputes within the Locality may still be referred upward to the Nayar. Lacking power to enforce his decisions, he attempts always to delay giving a decision without seeming to rebuff either party. The dispute over the Headmanship of the Seven was among those referred to him, and for over two years he was able to avoid committing himself to one faction or the other: a course made much easier by his absence from Nellivayal. Business had to be conduct through his resident agent, or by letter, or by personal visit to his house in coastal Malabar. During the period of fieldwork the principal development of the dispute lay in the question of the right to dispense ritual oil and the status of the village washerman, whose mattu the Kurumas use. This development at last forced the Nayar, Nellivayal Kidāv, to a decision. This decision, while favouring the Thirty Six Headman as against Kālambilau and its claims to independence as a new Locality, could not, of course be legally enforced. The significant aspect of it is, that having failed to gain his object by local reference upward in the intercaste village (1), reference outwards within the caste enabled Kalambilāu and its supporters to maintain their position, and even improve it.

1) As the Nellivayal washerman was involved, all those castes who used his mattu were concerned. He was accused of a caste offence serious enough for the Thirty Six to refuse his mattu.

This reference outward within the caste was to the Thalachils; more specifically, to the Edūr and Kōtūr Thalachils. We have already explained how Baradhan and his followers in the Seven turned to Edūr for their oil supply after being refused oil by the Thirty Six Headman. The role of the Thalachils as caste Headmen is to arbitrate in caste matters outside the provenance of the Nayar janmi or of a single Locality Headman. Most of their judgments concern pollution: for instance, incest or some other sexual offence involving parties from different Localities when the two Locality Headmen concerned cannot agree together. The Thalachils are themselves Locality Headmen, and similarly claim to be Nayar creations, while the Thalachil Muppan of Appād claims that his office was a creation of the Kottayam Rajas themselves.

Their authority has territorial limits less precisely defined than that of a Locality Headman. Like his, it extends over their own Localities, but also beyond, insofar as ordinary Locality Headmen look to them as clients. This clientship is variable in content: we have seen that the Thirty Six Headman emphasises his independence of Thalachils; but this independence is relative and not absolute. In certain circumstances, the Thirty Six must turn to the Thalachils as did Baradhan. The decision to grant Baradhan access to oil from the Edūr bottle was reached at a conference at Edūr between the Edūr and Kōtūr Thalachils, the Headman of the Thirty Six, and Baradhan himself. These two Thalachils'control' the Kurumas of South Wynad (1).

1) See the sketch map at page 296 above. Edūr lies just inside North Wynad, but his client Locality Headmen all are in South Wynad.

It is possible for a Headman to become the client of one Thalachil rather than another, but within the limits set by this traditional division of Wynad. Baradhan had the alternatives of Edūr or Kōtūr as patron in his struggle to acheive independence of the Thirty Six, but not those of the other two Thalachils, whose jurisdiction lies in North Wynad only. The exception to this is a dispute or problem involving the entire caste, when all four Thalachils, and if need be, all Locality Headmen also, assemble at Appād, where the Appād Thalachil controls the proceedings. In the case of Baradhan, he was a client of Kōtūr rather than of Edūr, for three main reaons: firstly, since the Thirty Six is under Edūr, they would be better able to bring pressure upon Edūr to make him refuse oil to Baradhan. Secondly, the present Kotur Thalachil is an ambitious and able man, anxious to wield his authority (1), whereas the Edūr Thalachil is a retiring old man, already nearly blind; and thirdly, while Baradhan has a connection with Edur through his wife's sister, he also has an indirect personal connection with Kotūr, whose wife is the daughter of Kēlan of Totapora. While Kēlan controlled Tōtapora he was an adherent of Baradhan, and during that time Baradhan managed to establish friendly personal relations with the Thalachil. Possibly the nature of this link by marriage, the fact that the bride-giver was Kēlan and so indirectly Baradhan himself, had its bearing on events.

1) As, for example, over the Wāriyāth case referred to at pp. 334/5.

The authority of the Thalachil, like that of any Locality Headman, derives from sources other than the traditional extra-caste sources of Nayar chiefs alone. The Nayar source is historically important; and still relevant today, as I have tried to show: but another source lies within the caste itself----control over marriage. The Locality consists basically of a bride-giving patrigroup, and one or more allied patrigroups who accept brides from it, as Atthiyūr does from Nochamvayal. But where the Locality is small it tends to become exogamous, like Avvāl, Vengūr, and possibly now Pattachēri; and therefore it must look outside its limits for brides, and for husbands. While many of the ties thus forged will be transitory ones with remote hamlets, some will lie close at hand, and tend to involve two adjacent Localities. In such circumstances the role of the Thalachil becomes important. We find in fact, in North Wynad, that the smaller Localities are much more interdependent than those of South Wynad: and that this interdependence involves the services of the Thalachils. The Thirty Six is less dependent than most or than any other Locality because it is so large, and contains numerous exogamous units within itself. It is therefore less obliged to seek brides beyond its borders than is any other Locality. Other factors also enforce a degree of dependence on the Thalachil: his power to mediate between Locality Headmen, and his ability to supply ritual services, as in the dispute over oil between the Seven and the Thirty Six. We find, therefore, that just as the hamlet cannot be understood without reference to the Locality, so also the Locality demands reference to the four

Thalachils for full comprehension of its status and organisation. This argument will be restated and elaborated in the ~~fixxxk~~ next and concluding section.

V v: Conclusion.

Very briefly in this section I intend to recapitulate some of the major features of Kuruma social organisation, and to relate them to the wider field of South Indian caste and kinship organisation. Major theoretical contributions to the study of these institutions have come from Levi-Strauss, Emeneau, and more recently Dumont. We can begin by stating that Kuruma kinship offers additional support for Dumont's argument (1) that Emeneau was mistaken in his view that double unilineal descent was the common underlying principle of South Indian kinship (2); but rather that it was unilineal descent in combination with some other principle. The complementary principle suggested by Dumont is "alliance as opposed to kin" (3). He also argues that a hierarchical principle underlies both kinship and caste (4), and here again the evidence provided by Kuruma society with its emphasis on unilateral (matrilateral) marriage supports his view. The patrigroup accepting a bride is felt in some way to be subordinated to that giving one.

Exchange marriages are forbidden among the Kurumas; but where unilateral bride-giving exists, we may expect to find a circle of exchange of wider extent. Such a circle is not consciously envisaged

1) Dumont, op. cit., pp. 21/2 and p. 44.
2) Emeneau, op. cit., pp. 174/5.
3) Dumont, op. cit., p. 44.
4) Dumont, op. cit., p. 44.

by the Kurumas, but its minimum extension can be defined as one of four connections by marriage and descent through four hamlets. A bride given from patrigroup (or hamlet) A marries into B and bears children there. This group of mother and children retain rights in hamlet A, the taiyillam, and may claim maintenance there and access to the House-gods, though they may not inherit property. The daughter born of this union will marry and bear children in hamlet C. This group of mother and children retain rights in their taiyillam of hamlet B, but also in hamlet A while their mother/grandmother in hamlet B. is living. The possibility is envisaged that the girl given in marriage from B to C may leave her husband to return to her natal hamlet; and that in turn her mother may return to A for maintenance, taking her daughter with her. A therefore is still prohibited from taking brides from C; or rather, from taking this particular girl with a direct link. It is likely however that marriage with an unrelated girl from C would be permitted. With the fourth hamlet (to which C gives brides) the minimum circle is completed. A is the hamlet of the maternal uncle to the children born in B; and of the Great maternal uncle to the children born in C. The inclusion of a fourth hamlet, D,; and thereby of a fourth generation in the matrilineal line implies that normally the head of this line in A would be dead; and that therefore this particular line has passed out of A into (say) B. D can therefore give a bride to A, but not to B.

This simplified version of the system of exchange illuminates what we have said about relations between hamlets and Localities.

Our minimal definition of a Locality in terms of the kinship relations existing between its component families was, that it consisted of a bride-giving patrigroup from which the Locality Headman was drawn, and at least one inangu group. While important reciprocal services are rendered by these two groups, such as the supply of a Third man for marriages, and of grave-diggers at a funeral, there are also assymmetric and hierarchic relations between them. The bride-giving patrigroup provides the Headman, priest of the Locality gods; the inangu hamlet provides the Adviser and medium, through whom these gods are consulted. But such a Locality is obviously dependent on external sources for recruitment: the Headman's patrigroup must obtain brides from outside the Locality, and the inangu group must give them outside. This necessity of turning to other Localities tends to involve the local Thalachil, who may be said to preside over the circle of exchange. To the extent that a Locality contains many patrigroups, and hence a greater possibility of finding and giving brides within its limits, so is it independent of the Thalachils; but this independence is limited by (among other factors) a tendency for large Localities to divide along Neighbourhood lines. The more this division takes place, the less independent the Locality (or rather the several divisions of the old Locality) becomes. And a further implication of such division into small territorial units of Neighbourhood size is that marriage within it becomes altogether impossible, the inangu group more or less merging with the bride-giving group; as seems to be the case now at Avvāl and Pattachēri.

Thus three distinct territorial groups, or levels, emerge: the hamlet, a patrilocal group which we can also see as a non-unilineal descent group. It holds land which it exploits by cultivation. It finds its essential unity in the cults of the Great hut, especially that of the (paternal) Ancestors. The group is strongly exogamous. The second group is the Locality, made up of real and classificatory parallel and cross cousins. It cannot be said to hold land, but is associated with land i.e. with its total territory, which it exploits by hunting. Its unity is expressed in the cult of a god or gods associated with the territory it covers. Unilateral bride-giving and the extension of kinship to the receiving group tend to make endogamy within it impossible. The third group is the endogamous group. Its limits can be defined in terms of minimum extension as the group composed of a Thalachil and his client Localities; its maximum extension the whole Kuruma community. Theoretically, endogamous groups at Thalachil level might emerge within the community, but in fact this has not happened. Kurumas prefer to marry their sisters close at hand, but to draw their brides from hamlets at a distance. In many cases the distance involved is such that the hamlets and Localities linked by these unions are under different Thalachils. The actual control of such unions tends to beside in the two Locality Headmen involved rather than in their Thalachils. The Thalachil exercises an indirect control. He intervenes when there is a dispute, or in order to prohibit a particular union or potential union, as Kotur Thalachil did in the Wāriyāth dispute.

The Kuruma cults of their gods appear consistent with this analysis of their social organisation. There are three distinct categories of divine beings: the Ancestors, the gods of the hamlet and Locality, and the Keliyappan spirits which lack any specific territorial connection. These three categories appear to correlate with three kinds of relationship, and also with three territorial levels.

The Ancestors are, par excellence, associated with the hamlet and its members as a corporate group based on patrilocal residence and real or fictional patrilineal descent. They inhabit the roof of the Great hut, where they are placated by periodic offerings of food. Their cult is restricted to members of the patrigroup. Exterior members of the hamlet are usually excluded from this cult unless and until their father dies and his ghost is installed among the Ancestors. Decisions about this, and about membership of the group and its recruitment by marriage or adoption are reserved for the House gods.

The House gods vary in number, but tend to form a trio; a male dominant god associated with the hamlet site and property; a male subordinate god associated with its junior members, and with female members recruited into the group by birth of adoption; and a goddess, associated with female members recruited by marriage. Though these gods are, like the Ancestors, thought to live in the Great hut, their concern extends outside it, while that of the goddess and the subordinate god extends beyond hamlet limits.

These gods make decisions about recruitment; or are deemed to do so. Their decisions are voiced through a Kuruma medium, who is normally drawn from a hamlet other than that whose gods are being consulted. Ideally he is a member of an inangu hamlet. In fact there is a shortage of mediums, so that it is common to find one acting in his own hamlet; but in a really important matter an "outside" medium would probably be brought in by the congregation. Their cult is strongly connected with money. This we can relate to the money payments made when a marriage is arranged, and to the payments normally involved in property relations with State and janmi, with village servants, and with the Locality Headman who supplies ritual oil. Money payments may also be made, or at least offered, to members of the matrigroup for their conduct of rites de passage. These offers are not always accepted, but it is their right to accept them. One of the gold panams of the ritual bride-price should, for instance, go to the bride's maternal uncle.

The relative status of the three gods reflects the hierarchical and exclusive aspect of the external kinship and affinal connections of the hamlet. The goddess presides over the wives of the hamlet members. She is neither subordinate to nor superior to, the dominant god. She represents a connection which puts the hamlet (as a bride-receiving group) into a subordinate relation with another (bride-giving) hamlet, but this subordinacy is translated into a sexual difference, and therefore concealed. When, sometimes, a hamlet goddess "becomes fierce", she is expelled from the Great hut and lodged outside, and a new, more quiescent

goddess "brought in." We can assume that this process implies the breaking of a particular affinal or inangu tie and the establishment of others. Normally the goddess is a "quiet" being, whose pronouncements through a medium are highly formal. This "quietness" may be correlated with the (in fact) subordinate relation of the hamlet to those from which brides are taken, and the preference for selecting these at a distance from the hamlet, so that disputes over property rights and political allegiance are minimised.

The subordinate deity has a double aspect, or even a multiple aspect. He is concerned less with territory (in contrast with the dominant god) than with people. When a family of Kurumas migrates to a new territory they usually adopt a new dominant god from that territory; but their original subordinate god may accompany them on their migration: he is said to "follow the blood trail." He may then be installed in the Great hut of the new settlement when it is established. His concern is with the juniors in a hamlet; and this concern extends not only to members with property rights, i.e. male members and their sons, but also to those with rights of maintenance---married 'sisters' and their sons. In both cases we find a connection through the female line rather than the male; there is the obviously matrilineal connection through the sisters, and through their daughters to the third generation: there is also that through wives---through the "sisters" brought in in marriage from another hamlet. For it can be argued that a man's children belong to his wife rather than to himself, until they marry and establish themselves as full members of the paternal hamlet.

The subordinate god is therefore involved in a potential conflict with the dominant god. This conflict arises from his equal interest in "sister's sons" and "sons", in which the patrilocal principle normally dominant is threatened by a matriline whose starting point is the hamlet. The dominant god on the other hand is concerned to exclude "sister's sons" from the hamlet. This conflict appears to explain both the double role of the subordinate god as "god" and as "kothi", and the fact of his subordination. When "disorder" exists in the hamlet, the subordinate god temporarily loses his subordinate status, and is said to become a "kothi", or a "kothi" acts through him. The region outside the hamlet fence is said to be "full of kothis" which are "trying to enter" the hamlet. Misfortune is a function of their entry. It may show itself in the form of disobedience to elders or to the Headman; or in the form of sickness and loss.

From the subordinate god we turn to the four Keliyappans who preside over marriage. They are not territorial gods, save insofar as they are immanent everywhere in the limits of the caste territory. We have suggested their association with the four matriclans, which are similarly represented everywhere, at least potentially (1). This picture is slightly blurred by the fact that some subordinate gods (and even dominant gods) are also Keliyappans, and by the existence of clan taboos in some hamlets. One possible explanation of this lies in the principle of hierarchy. We have observed that verbal preferences exist for

1) The size of the hamlet is a relevant factor; but even where only two clans are represented, all four Keliyappans are potentially present.

some clans as against others. There certainly seems to be an explanation of this category for the connection of the Keliyappans with Nayars in Kuruma tradition. The story is, that each of the four matriclans originated in the union of a Vēdan girl with a Nayar chief. The descendants of each of these four unions were the first members of the matriclans, and the spirits of the Nayars became the four Keliyappans. These legendary unions serve both to explain and justify Kuruma membership of the local caste system, and their subordinate position in it.

Finally we may say that, though the Keliyappans are associated with the matriclans, they are not necessarily identified with them. To the Kurumas, Nayars represent caste status, political power, and a connection with specific territory. Perhaps then the Keliyappans represent a combination of two principles; of matrilineality as represented by the matriclans, and of patrilocality as represented by the rights of an individual matriclansman, or of a matriline, in a specific hamlet or Locality. The nexus of the two seems to occur in marriage; and of the Locality Headman who controls marriage it is said: "he holds the four Keliyappans under his armpit." The maternal uncle can "unbind" a particular matriline and matriclan in a hamlet, but only when consent has been given by the territorial authority who controls all four matriclans.

A systematic comparison of this society with other tribal or low-caste societies of Kerala would be invaluable; but unhappily only brief accounts of these are available; with the exception of Ehrenfels' recent study of the Kadar. Our other resources amount

to the publications of the two Iyers (1) on Travancore and Cochin; and to von Furer-Haimendorf's "Ethnographic Notes on some Communities of the Wynad." These publications represent survey work rather than intensive study. Nevertheless, certain basic similarities seem to emerge. Most of the south Kerala tribal societies are matrilineal with more or less weakly defined rules of residence, and with territorial and ritual offices succeeding in the local group, generally from a man to his brother or his son. Their Headmen, like the Kuruma Locality Headman, have rights over tracts of land said to be vested in them by Nayar of even Kshatriya chiefs in the plains. This tie with the Nayars ---or rather with plains chieftains---appears to be very important; perhaps it is stressed in order to counterbalance the sense of being exploited by plains dwellers who visit the hills as traders, or come as settlers. But their social organisation, and in particular their economy, appears to far simpler than that of the Wynad Kurumas.

Kuruma kinship terms.

	Reference	Address
Grandfather	Mutacchan/Mutappan	As ref., also Tatappa
Grandmother	Mutiyamma	As ref;, also Tatamma.
Father	Appan/Acchan	Appa
Mother	Amma/Thalla	Amma
Son	Magan	(name)
Daughter	Magal	(name)
Grandchild	Pēran (m); Pērathi (f)	(name)
Brother, e. or y. (ws)	Āngala	
Sister, e. or y. (ms)	Pengala	
Brother (elder)	Erthan	Anna
" (younger)	Aniyan	(name)
Sister (elder)	Ertathi	Akka
" (younger)	Aniyathi	(name)
Fa's elder brother	Valiyappan/Pēpan	Pēpa
Fa's younger brother	Eleyappan/Yēpan	Yēpa
Fa's brother's wife	Pēma (e)/Yēma (y)	Pēma/Yēma/Māmi
Fa's sister	Acchi/Atthe	As ref.
Fa's sister's husband	No term, or māman	No term, or māman
Fa's brother's child	As for brother/sister	
Fa's sister's child	No term, or brother/sister	
Mother's brother	Māman	Māman
Mo's bro's wife	Māmi	Māmi
Mo's bro's child	No term, or brother/sister	
Mo's bro's grandchild	Marumagan, or no term	(name)
Mo's sister	Pēma or Yēma	Pēma/Yēma
Mo's sister's child	No term, or brother/sister	
Mo's sister's grandchild	Marumagan, or no term	

	Reference	Address
Husband	Kuruman	No term
Wife	Penna/Kurumathi	(name)
Husband's parents	Mutan/Muti	Mutan/Muti
Husband's e. brother	Periyōvan	No term
Husband's y. brother	Cheriyōvan	(name)
Husband's brother's wife	Nāta	Nāta, or name.
Husband's sisters	Nāta	Nāta, or name.
Wife's brother	Bhāvan/Aliyan	Aliya, or name
Wife's sister	Periyōl or Cheriyōl	No term, name.
Wife's father	Ammamutan	Ammamutan
Wife(s mother	Ammaimuti	Ammaimuti
Wife's father's brothers	Valiyammamutan/Eleyammamutan	As ref.
Wife's father's sisters	Valiyammai/Eleyammai	As ref.
Wife's mother's brothers	Valiyappan/Eleyappan	Pēpan/Yēpan
Wife's mother's sisters	Ammai	Ammai
Son's wife	Marumagal	(name)
Daughter's husband	Marumagan	(name)

Membership of Atthiyūr, in order of seniority.

A. Senior living generation (appankūr)

1. Vullan, widower; Headman since 1944/5; first wife's children established elsewhere, in her 2nd husband's house.

2. Chandi, left Atthiyur about 1945 after quarrel with Vullan, to live near wife's hamlet. Has never returned, so his rights in Atthiyur are deemed to have lapsed.

3. Vulli, Headman-elect, died 1953. Son by deceased 1st wife establish-ed here; widow left, with her children, to remarry.

4. Kāvilan, widower; elder daughter as housekeeper. Headman-elect since death of Vulli.

5. Vullikan, widower since 1950/1; remarried 1954 (widow concubinage); Eldest sonk of his 2nd wife/concubine already married and established in own deceased father's hamlet of Maddūr; his 3 younger brothers are unmarried, and have not yet chosen between Atthiyūr and Maddūr.

6. Chapu, Manager.

B. Second Generation (magankūr).

1. Chickanan, left for wife's hamlet early 1953, already ailing; died there in May 1953, buried in Atthiyur. Widow remarried.

2. Chinnan, left for a tenancy near wife's house in 1952; remains a member of Atthiyur, which the family visit regularly.

3. Kesavan, left here to live in wife's hamlet late 1952, dying of ascites; died Feb. 1953, buried Atthiyur. Widow remarried.

4. Madhavan.

5. Ucchan, left when ailing to live in wife's hamlet, mid-1953; died khere Sept. 1953; widow remarried.

6. Koravan, expelled 1952 for relations with his cheriyōl, the 1st wife of Atthiyur Appu. These two now live elsewhere in concubinage and theoretically outcasted.

7. Gopalan.

8. Ondan.

9. Appu.

10. The three younger sons of Vullikan's present (2nd) wife by her first husband are unmarried residents in Atthiyūr, and so still able to chose between membership of this hamlet and of their natal hamlet of Maddūr.

C. Third generation, (mūnā'kūr).

1. Molagan. Inherited the Managership from his father Chātu c. 1947, but left the hamlet with his widowed mother when she remarried. Relinquished membership of Atthiyūr 1952 when he married from the hamlet of his mother's 2nd husband. His brother and sisters have similarly lost membership here.

No other male in this generation has yet married.

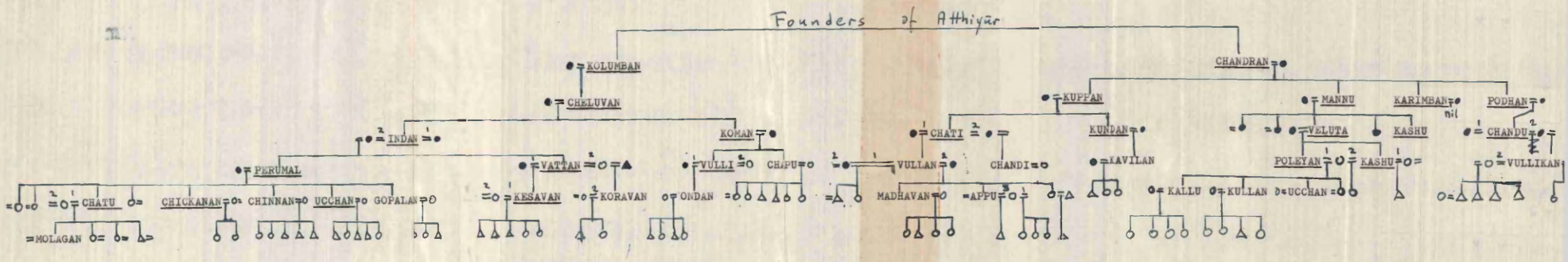
Upper Atthiyūr.

1. Kallu, Headman. Is older than Lower-hamlet Ucchan, junior to Mādhavan.

2. Kullan, Headman-elect.

3. Ucchan.

4. Son of Kashu, an unmarried labourer living elsewhere; he may yet claim membership of the hamlet, though he rarely visits it.



Chatu's widow remarried elsewhere; her children accompanied her, and have relinquished membership of Atthiyur.

Chinnan settled near his wife's house in 1951. He remains a member of Atthiyur.

Kesavan's widow remarried, her children going with her.

Koravan was expelled from Atthiyur; lives in concubinage with Appu's 1st wife.

Chandi liv -es in his wife's house; has informally relinquished his membership here.

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